This month's full ballet guide

Dance and Dancers

MARCH 1955

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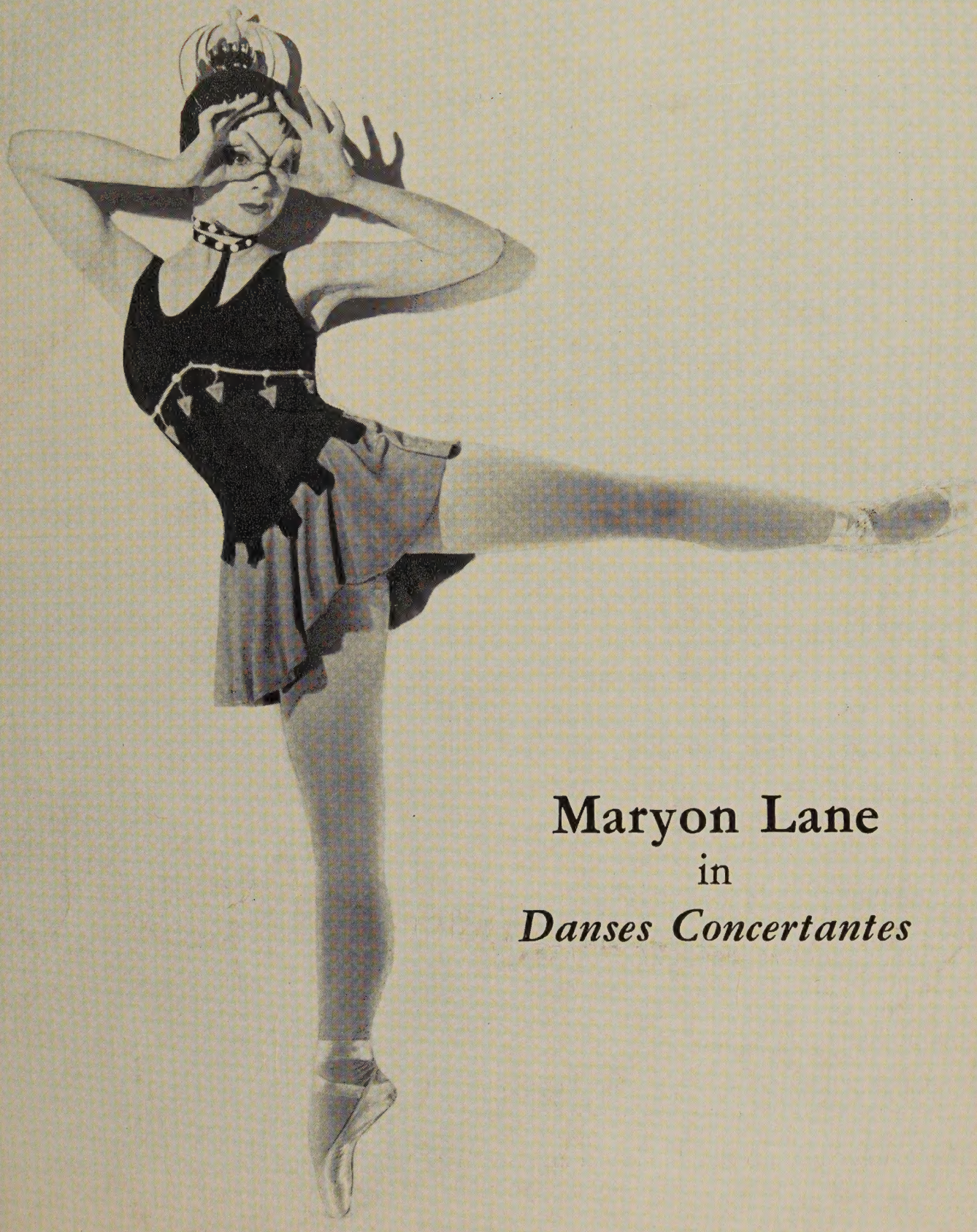

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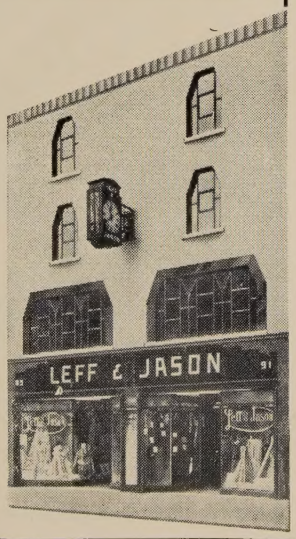

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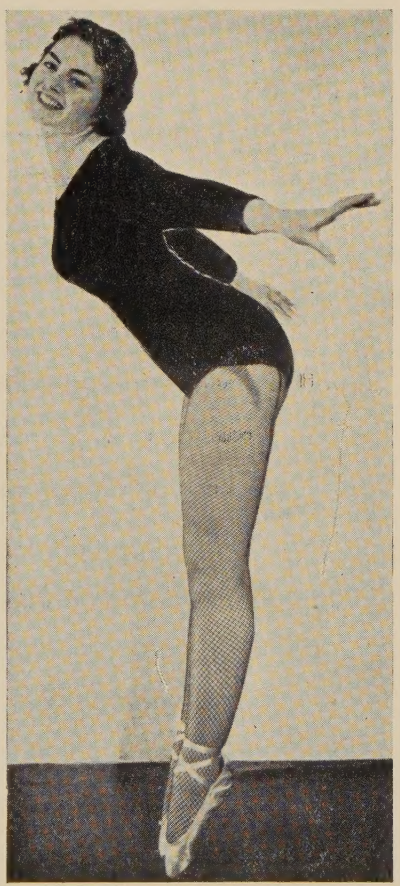

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Personality of the month

Photo: Denis de Marney

PEGGY VAN PRAAGH

Reason: For paying no heed to adverse criticism of the company of which she is Assistant Director—The Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet—and quietly pulling the company together. The quality of the dancers and repertoire during the last season at Sadler's Wells Theatre was as high as, if not higher than, it has ever been.

IN ballet is the regiment of women monstrous? Certainly, for good or bad, ballet in England is a matriarchy. Those grand old names de Valois and Rambert are now slowly being joined by a third, Van Praagh. Peggy Van Praagh is not yet a fully-fledged Director as are her seniors, but originally as ballet-mistress and in latter years as Assistant Director of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, she has played a vital, possibly *the* vital, part in controlling the destinies of this young company.

A few months ago we attacked the seemingly ambiguous policy of the Theatre Ballet; the company's autumn season has given us the best possible interim reply. The Theatre Ballet is capable of playing the part of equal if smaller partner to its big brother at Covent Garden. Let us hope that it is never pushed into the background, but is allowed to develop as a company and not fobbed off as a finishing school. This can only be achieved by keeping the company as a unit and not as a sort of Clapham Junction for Sadler's Wells' dancers.

Much of the credit for the Theatre Ballet's achievement goes to Peggy Van Praagh. She is probably the most widely experienced administrator to be brought up *inside* British ballet. She is a second-generation leader, an indigenous product, formed not by the Diaghilev or Pavlova companies and direct contact with Russian and Italian teachers, but from the early years of British ballet itself. The principal influences on her, one supposes, have been Margaret Craske, Marie Rambert, Antony Tudor and finally Ninette de Valois.

A fine dancer herself (she was an adorable Swanilda in the Sadler's Wells *Coppelia*, and created three of the most important roles in the Tudor repertory), a notable teacher, an excellent Director (at the beginning of the war she directed the London Ballet with Maude Lloyd), and a charming person, she might well be called upon one day to step into the shoes of Dame Ninette. Whatever the future may hold for her, she may rest assured that the fine work she has put into the making of the Theatre Ballet will not pass unremembered. Should the time ever come when it is thought desirable for the Theatre Ballet to have a full-time Director solely to itself, she would surely prove an excellent choice. Her handling of the recent wage dispute in the Theatre Ballet and the way in which she has pulled the company together after upheavals, which could well have finished many a company, make it obvious that she has exceptional ability.

March 1955 Vol. 6 No. 3

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS
Assistant Editor: CLIVE A. BARNES

WORLD'S LARGEST NET SALE IN THE FIELD

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AN ILL WIND FROM THREE QUARTERS

IN spite of Mr. T. S. Eliot's assertion, in *The Waste Land*, that "April is the cruellest month . . .", it would be hard to find a month more cruel than February as far as ballet is concerned this year. Three incidents have occurred that might well have a disastrous effect on the future of ballet in England.

The fact that Festival Ballet were finding it hard to pay their way in England has long been common gossip. Ballet, being the expensive art that it is, has never had the reputation of being a paying proposition. The dancers are known to have been paid well and regularly, which says a good deal.

While Festival Ballet is in the process of an exhausting American tour, receiving excellent notices almost everywhere and grossing what appear on paper to be quite satisfactory box office receipts, it has been thought fit to call a meeting of creditors and then publish the company's at-home financial complications in the national press. Now the point of the meeting of creditors was really to explain to the creditors the reason why they had not been paid and the fact that the American tour had not brought in the money that was expected; also to explain that the debts could possibly not be met until the company had undertaken another European tour and summer season at the Royal Festival Hall. All well and good; one is sorry for those to whom money is owed and, given a fair chance, no doubt the amount (in the region of £57,000) would have eventually been paid. It is a pity it all had to be made public.

In spite of rumours that the company is finished, occasioned by this action, it is now known that the artists have signed their contracts for a Spanish tour and for the summer season at the Royal Festival Hall.

Loss to visiting companies

THE announcement that the Stoll Theatre may cease to be a theatre next year is also a body-blow to those who believe that the visits of foreign companies are essential as a stimulus to the art of ballet as a whole. It is about the only theatre to which it has been economically possible to bring large foreign companies. To Peter Daubeny the world of the dance is greatly indebted, for he has brought to the Stoll, over the past few years, a great pageant of the dance plucked from all corners of the globe. Without this theatre, London may well sink back to becoming a very minor power in the world of the dance. It is no good anyone saying that it does not matter because we always have our own companies. True, we have got our own companies and fine ones too; but it is doubtful if they would have become what they are or continue to be what they are if they have not the inspiration and competition of foreigners in their midst.

Politics again

LASTLY, it is sad to relate that politics have again interfered with a season of ballet. Last year it was Soviet dancers who could not appear in Paris owing to a political situation; now the Rumanian State Dancers, who at least opened in Paris and were sensational, have cancelled their London appearances. A member of the orchestra defected in Paris, a situation arose and the company was recalled to Rumania. London, which was waiting to welcome the first dance company from Rumania, was thus denied that privilege. These things are sad; for it means that art and politics are becoming hopelessly mixed—which makes it clear that those concerned have no idea as to the real meaning and aim of art.

No, February has indeed been a cruel month for the dance.

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More than a legend—a sort of religion

is how somebody in the British Embassy in Madrid once described Antonio who is now appearing with his company at the Palace Theatre and who is also the subject of this month's back cover (see also page 30).

Antonio in a serious mood planning new productions and the future of his company.

All photos: Annemarie Heinrich

THE highest-paid dancer to visit England —the greatest male dancer of our day —he dreamt of castles in Spain and got them in triplicate (Madrid, Seville, Malaga) —that he is a millionaire in pesetos—that he got £3,000 for twenty minutes dancing at King Farouk's wedding. These extravagant things have been said about Antonio and, contrary to many such claims about people, most of them are completely true.

Together with Markova and Fonteyn, Antonio is one of the few artists left in the world who can justly be called fabulous. Off the stage he behaves as most people think a star should behave—he has large expensive cars and moves everywhere with a retinue. He loves clothes, diamond necklaces, horses and furniture, in that order. He also loves, he declares, his audience; though whether before clothes or after furniture has never been revealed. He claims that he loves British audiences best though he probably says just the same thing in every country in which he dances.

There is no doubt though that the British have taken this dancer to their hearts. Blushing secretaries in offices swoon at the mention of his name and be-minked matrons wave valuable Bank of England notes beneath the noses of adamant stage-door keepers in order to visit his dressing-room.

Underneath all this hocus-pocus, which is after all the life-blood of the theatre, there lies a very great artist and a dancer of quite phenomenal ability.

Many people will remember how our beloved Gracie Fields could come upon the Music Hall stage, give a piercing whistle and immediately have the audience in the palm of her hand. So it is with Antonio—he enters with a quick strutting walk, hammers the stage with a few machine-gun like heel-beats and all hell breaks loose in the auditorium.

He has a personality that reaches up to the furthest point in the gallery. His smile sweeps the stalls, his wink is reserved for his friends in the boxes. In every fibre of his body he is a star of the theatre, even if his dances are sometimes conceived as audience-pleasers rather than true expressions of the art of his people.

With him there is no sitting back, leaving his company to do the donkey-work while he makes a few spectacular appearances. It is as though he says to himself "the audience has paid to see me, and see me they jolly well will, even if it kills me in the process." But there is never any sign that his numerous changes and appearances are doing anything like killing him. He is like a human dynamo who draws his energy from the contact with those out front.

In the click of a castanet he can change from a gypsy expressing his love in the wild ferocious frenzy of the dance, to a gentle nightingale wooed by the lady in Granados' *Goyescas,* or to an elegant courtier with all the stately grace of the Spanish Court. Such is his remarkable range.

No wonder the bobby-soxers, and those whose socks are not so bobby, sigh "oh, OH, Antonio!"

Also in the company is Antonio's cousin, Paco Ruiz, seen dancing a Farruca. *Surrounding him are Pepita Morillas and Alicia Diaz with guitarists Manuel Moreno and Mariano Cordoba.*

Since the Antonio and Rosario partnership broke up, his partner has been Rosita Segovia, here seen in Almeria *of Albeniz.*

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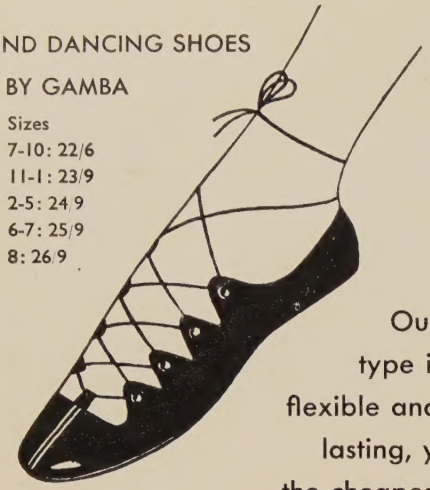

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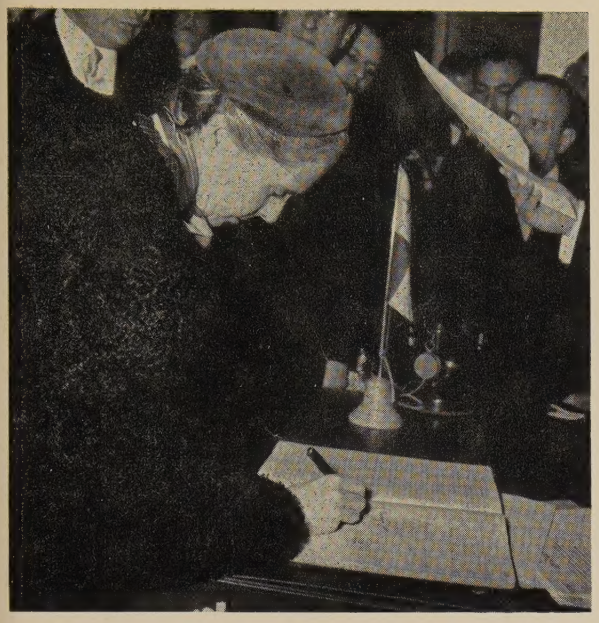

WHAT I AM UP AGAINST

by Dame NINETTE DE VALOIS

Running a ballet company is not a bed of roses. From all sides comes criticism, from every corner comes a " Why don't you do this, or that, or the other? " Sadler's Wells Ballet comes in for hard knocks, advice, warnings, often from those who know little of its problems. We asked Dame Ninette de Valois some of the questions often asked of us. Here are her replies.

Dame Ninette is not, as might be imagined, answering the questions we have posed her. She is signing the register after the recent wedding of her ballerina assoluta, Margot Fonteyn, to Dr. Arias in Paris.

Photo: Lido

Touring, home and abroad

Q: It has been said, and I think rightly, that after the Sadler's Wells Ballet comes back from its long American tours, the resulting exhaustion shows in performances at the Garden for, possibly, as long as six months. Obviously these tours bring enormous prestige to Britain as well as much-needed dollars, but are these very real gains not rather offset by fatigue and adverse criticism that is apt to be made?

A: It is quite true that long tours in America result in great exhaustion, and it has been decided that the company will never again take out such tours as it did in 1950-51 and 1953-54.

There is an element of balletomane exaggeration in the suggestion that the "exhaustion" has shown for a period of six months. This would be hard to prove in any case, as the summer holiday has always come round within four months of their return.

Q: The most regular subject of letters from our readers concerns the provincial tours of the Sadler's Wells Ballet. Why is it not possible for the company to tour the British provincial cities more regularly?

A: The Sadler's Wells Ballet is in line with the great national ballet companies of Europe, but so far without many of their amenities, and less understanding among its disciples.

Our ballets are mounted on a scale for big opera houses and our repertoire follows the same lines. There are about six theatres in England that can take our smaller ballets adequately and our bigger ballets very inadequately.

In the future the public outside London must accept a repertoire which can be correctly presented and executed. Up till now it has unfortunately preferred the mutilation of works which, in their proper form, are quite unsuitable for presentation outside Covent Garden Opera House. It must be remembered that artists are expected to serve the public but not to be sacrificed to it.

No time for creation

Q: Since Ashton created *Homage to the Queen* for the Coronation there was no new ballet—apart from the new production of *Coppelia* and *The Firebird*—until the beginning of January this year. Could you explain why it has not been possible to mount a new ballet in this 18 months?

A: *Homage to the Queen*—a lengthy and complicated divertissement employing some 55 dancers—had four performances before the annual holiday in June '53. The company re-assembled in August to rehearse for a three weeks' season in London prior to the five months' American tour.

The repertoire of the London season could not contain any of the New York ballets as the scenery had to be shipped to America six weeks in advance of the American opening date. As the American repertoire had not been danced since June it must be obvious that the two repertoires had to be in rehearsal at the same time. The company then travelled 20,000 miles, and gave six to eight performances every week from September to the end of January.

On their return, following a two weeks' rest, a revised *Coppelia* was mounted and rehearsed within a fortnight. In addition a repertoire of ballets (still on the high seas) had to be revived, many not danced for 12 months.

Within a month of our reopening we were alone at Covent Garden with seven performances a week, as the opera company was out on its spring tour. We had *The Firebird* to produce and that took about nine weeks.

May found us committed to a week in Holland for the Festival and again we had to embark on a double repertoire, as the ballets danced in Holland for one week were actually out of the London repertoire for three weeks on account of shipping. The company broke up for its summer holiday about ten days after their return from Holland. I have heard this particular twelve months' work cited as an example of our "complacency" and "lack of enterprise!"

Light on rehearsal time

Q: One always imagines that once a lighting-plot is set that it is there for keeps. When *Giselle* was revived last summer the lighting was particularly bad, although when it was first revised a few years ago it was excellent. Is there a reason for this change?

A: Since the production of *Giselle* in '51 the company was unable to have a full stage call until February of this year 1955. Extra lighting equipment was added to the Opera House last year, and certain readjustments made to the old. Many performances of standard operas and ballets had to be readjusted to the new conditions but without any opportunity for stage rehearsals as new productions had to be given priority.

Q: A recent performance of *Ballet Imperial* was particularly ragged, nor has this been the only ballet to suffer. Is enough time given to rehearsing new dancers?

A: I do not consider this a fair description of any recent performance. Perfection cannot always be attained by any group of individuals. This is more noticeable when such a group has had to readjust itself week by week to a different sized stage—a stage seldom built for a company of this size.

One rehearsal on the Covent Garden stage of a ballet such as *Ballet Imperial* is all we get, after an absence of anything up to four or five months. But this, I am afraid, is the common fate of opera houses devoted to two large companies.

New dancers often see their costume, stage and lighting, and hear their orchestra for the first time on the day that they give their first performance. The theatre is a hard school for beginners but they would not benefit if it were easier.

Q: Criticism has recently been levelled at the playing of the Covent Garden orchestra for ballet. Why should an orchestra that is constantly playing together be guilty of these mistakes?

A: In a large opera house, where overwork and overcrowded programmes are the natural order of the day, the orchestra has often to contend with many of the difficulties that are also the daily fare of singers, dancers and stage-managements.

Ballerinas away

Q: There are a number of dancers in the Sadler's Wells Ballet with ballerina status, which they deserve. Unfortunately the public can go to ballet several times a week and not see them dance. Is the company top-heavy with ballerinas?

A: It is customary for all national state ballets to produce a rather larger number of dancers than they adequately present all the time. As a company grows in status this problem readjusts itself.

Our dancers are in increasing demand as guest artists in foreign countries and we like to be in a position to release them when such offers are made but their release cannot be made at the expense of the theatre's repertoire.

Q: But in the days of the Diaghilev and de Basil companies there was hardly a performance in which the stars did not appear. Is it better for ballerinas to appear every night?

A: Speaking as an older member of the Diaghilev company, many of the dancers were, in my opinion, very overworked. But there is a happy medium, and I would say that four performances a week is a good *average* number for a young dancer to give.

Q: The companies at Sadler's Wells and Covent Garden are both directed by you, and presumably there are other common elements which control both companies. How is it that ballet and opera performances in both theatres quite often clash?

A: Every effort is made to avoid these clashes, but it is not always possible. The Covent Garden Opera has a considerable number of guest artists to consider and heavy stage rehearsals of a new work may mean the ballet has to take over a night that inadvertently clashes with a " Wells " ballet night. Often the problem is reversed.

Wedding in Paris — Parties in London

On Friday, February 4, Margot Fonteyn announced her engagement to Dr. Roberto Arias, a lawyer-diplomat whose father has twice been President of Panama. On the following Sunday, February 6, they were married quietly in Paris. Here they are together at the reception at the Hotel Plaza-Athenée after the ceremony.

The ceremony at the Consualate of Panama in the Rue de la Paix. Sir Gladwyn Jebb, British Ambassador in Paris, who was one of the witnesses is seen with Margot Fonteyn and Dr. Arias. Dame Ninette de Valois, another witness is seen peering over Fonteyn's shoulder.

Photos : Lido

A week or so before her engagement was announced, Margot Fonteyn went to a party at the Yugoslav Embassy to welcome the artists of the Zagreb Opera and ballet company. Seen here talking to an old friend Nenad Lhotka (principal male dancer) and Viera Markovic.

Two more old friends meet at the Yugoslav Embassy party—Arnold Haskell and Margarita Froman. She is the producer and choreographer attached to the Zagreb company.

At the same party three of the company talk to each other—Nevenka Bidjin, Tomislav Neralic (one of the principal singers) and Sonia Kastl (the company's ballerina).

Photos : D & D

In the Crush Bar, Covent Garden gave a party after The Midsummer Marriage. Frederick Ashton is talking to Beatrice Dawson (stage and film designer), Robert Irving (conductor) and Mrs. Russell-Roberts (Ashton's sister).

Also at the Covent Garden party were Eric Johns (editor of The Stage) and critic A. V. Coton talking to composer Joseph Horovitz and ballerina Beryl Grey.

Photos : D & D

NEW HOUSE FOR SENORA ARIAS

Margot Fonteyn looks over the house where she and her husband, Senor Roberto Arias, will live after they return from their honeymoon. These photographs, are by Margot Fonteyn's brother—FELIX FONTEYN.

Up the garden path of her new home in Thurloe Place, Kensington, comes Margot Fonteyn to be met by her interior decorator, Roy Rossotti. An unusual feature of the hall is the straw wall-paper.

On into the drawing room she examines, with Roy Rossotti, the newly hung chandelier. The curtain rods, seen in the picture, are black ebonised with black rings. One side of the room will be hung with grey velvet curtains.

On the staircase of the Spanish-type hall of the house that may possibly become the Panamanian Embassy in London. Dr. Arias has been appointed Panamanian Ambassador to the Court of St. James's.

Other members of the family come to look at the "Straw Room," a small sitting room attached to the main bedroom. With Margot Fonteyn is her mother, Mrs. Hookham, and her aunt, Miss Margaret Hookham.

THE MIDSUMMER MARRIAGE

Opera in three acts first given by the Covent Garden Opera Company at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on 27th January, 1955. Words and Music, Michael Tippett; Scenery and Costumes, Barbara Hepworth; Choreography, John Cranko.

Dancers in the ballet scenes

Strephon (also a Hare, a Fish and a Bird) — — — — PIRMIN TRECU
A Girl Dancer (also a Hound, an Otter and a Hawk) — — JULIA FARRON
Dancers attendant on the Ancients — THE COVENT GARDEN OPERA BALLET

POSSIBLY the most unrewarding task that a choreographer is given is that of arranging ballet scenes in operas. Nobody particularly wants them. The audience which has come to see and hear opera is seldom the same as the one which goes to ballet and the moments when dancers cavort upon the stage are, to Mr. Opera Audience, a pain in the neck. In the last century, opera ballet played a far more important part in the proceedings than it does today. In fact, the dances in which Taglioni danced in Meyerbeer's opera *Robert le Diable* started off the whole era of Romantic ballet. In the present century Fokine's Polovtsian dances in Borodine's *Prince Igor* were responsible for the whole trend of contemporary ballet, though they were not composed for a production of the opera but as a separate entity.

The composer of *The Midsummer Marriage* has obviously intended that the ballet should be an integral part of this, his first opera. Michael Tippett has probably his own ideas of the kind of ballet that was needed and whether these conformed to Cranko's views on the subject will probably remain one of the theatre's close-guarded secrets. We can only judge the results by what was shown on the stage.

In his libretto, Tippett has clambered well along the limb of Frazer's *The Golden Bough* in his search for mystery and ritual. It is an arboreal climb that is not always easy for others to keep up with unless they are steeped in the ancient rites of midsummer. In choreographing the various dance episodes, Cranko has only skimmed the surface like a kingfisher—which bird gives its name to one of the opera's principal characters.

The main ballet episodes fall into four rituals. In the second act—*Earth in Autumn, Waters in Winter* and *Air in Spring*; in the third act—*Fire in Summer*. Apart from this last ritual, the others take the form of the chase—Hound after Hare, Otter after Fish and Hawk after Bird. In each case Julia Farron is the hunter and Pirmin Trecu the hunted while the *corps* supplies the necessary environment or element.

DANCERS AS ANIMALS

Much of Cranko's choreography is inventive and at moments beautiful. Rather in the manner of Martha Graham he has made interesting use of properties and costume shape as an integral part of his dance pattern: particularly so in the Autumn ritual, when the bodies of the dancers were combined with skeletal leaf-shape constructions, and in Winter when the cloaks of the girls were thrown back to make the ripple caused by fast-moving animals through water.

As a fish, Trecu does some convincing dives into the waves but his emergence is less satisfactory. I liked also the way in which Farron, as the Hawk, was carried across the stage in a series of swoops, eventually to hover over her prey preparatory to the death dive. These and other moments were memorable but the final impression was unsatisfactory owing to the absurdity of the *Fire in Summer* ritual. Why anyone should have thought that a gymnastic display, similar to those seaside spectacles once sponsored by a popular newspaper, should be the right accompaniment to voluntary human sacrifice is past all comprehension. What was obviously intended as a culminating moment in the opera was badly let down by the ballet and greeted with hilarity from the gallery.

In the mime role of Strephon, a temple dancer, Pirmin Trecu in his first major role on the Covent Garden stage acquitted himself well. At one moment he had difficulty in synchronising the clash of his property cymbals with the real cymbals in the orchestra but otherwise he gave a puckish air to the proceedings. Julia Farron went through her animal and avian roles like a metamorphosed Black Queen from *Checkmate*, which was just how these roles should be. An opera librettist would not know how thankless it is for choreographers and dancers to portray a veritable menagerie on the stage. Animals are the bugbear of ballet.

This was the first occasion that the Covent Garden Opera Ballet (the Turner boys and girls) were shown in a ballet of any length or importance and they proved to be a most promising collection whose precision and stage presence was no less impressive than their more experienced brothers and sisters.

MONUMENTAL SETTING

There is no doubt that the designer played a vital part in the ballet scenes as indeed in the opera as a whole. Barbara Hepworth's multiple constructivist setting is of the type of which I personally tired by the end of the thirties, yet I found myself rivetted in admiration to her mighty gateway throughout the evening. Her use of various planes and textures with light played on it to give ever-changing effects of mood and time was as ingenious as it was beautiful. The masses of shadow and colour formed a perfect composition at all times. Her arrangement of brown and neutral planks made a far more convincing grove of peeling gum-tree stems than any army of naturalistically painted flats could ever do. Not all her ballet costumes were so successful, though the best of them were ingenious and had a great feeling for the flow of the dance. Here is a designer to whom choreographers could well give some serious consideration.

The libretto demanded something that no choreographer or designer could ever give it. Tippett's fine score really demands an oratorio treatment and what he has written for the ballet could well stand on its own should such a severance be thought feasible. It amounts to some of the best ballet music of the past decade. **P.W.**

Above: Julia Farron as a Hawk and Pirmin Trecu as a Bird in the third ritual, Air in Spring, *which is one of the ballet scenes in Tippett's opera.*

Left: Farron as a Hound and Trecu as a Hare in the first ritual, Earth in Autumn. *The* corps de ballet *are seen as trees holding Barbara Hepworth's leaf shapes.*

Photos: Houston Rogers

Polovtsian girls in the ballet scene from the Zagreb National Opera's production of Prince Igor.

Right: Sonia Kastl as Juliet and Nenad Lhotka as Romeo in the bedroom scene of Froman's production of Romeo and Juliet.

Photos: Paul Wilson

Zagreb in London

After an unpromising start in *Romeo and Juliet*, the Yugoslav National Opera and Ballet company won through with ballets having a national background.

IT is curious how the destiny of a city, as a centre of ballet, depends almost entirely upon one person. Without the help of the Marchioness of Ripon it is doubtful whether the Diaghilev Ballet would have come to London when it did.

Since the war it has been Peter Daubeny who has brought most of the important foreign dance companies to London and thus made it an international capital of the dance. Without the untiring energy of his organisation, dancers from remote corners of the earth might never have found their way here. Good and bad, London is able to see it all; and even from the bad we learn lessons.

Zagreb, in Yugoslavia, is not a city of imposing size; but the opera company which opened a season of opera and ballet at the Stoll Theatre on January 24 was formidable in quality and size. The opening production, Borodine's *Prince Igor*, was given with great gusto if a certain roughness in the orchestral playing. It was good to see this fine heroic opera again in London after so many years.

Act 3, in the Tartar Camp, brought in the familiar Polovtsian Dances, reproduced, as the programme stated, "according to Fokin." The "e" was not the only thing missing from Margarita Froman's reproduction. Some of the *entrées* and groupings seemed different from what we know, though the basic Fokine steps remained. However, Fokine himself changed these dances of Polovtsian warriors, Circassian boys and captive slave-girls so as to make his ballet into a plausible one-act work, so one can hardly quibble about the slight changes that have taken place with the return of the dances to the setting in which Borodine intended that they should be seen. They fall admirably into the present production and do not dominate the opera as a whole as so frequently happened at Covent Garden before the war when the de Basil company appeared as guests.

It is not easy to evaluate the worth of a company after one viewing of this nature—high spirits and verve can cover a multitude of faults in schooling. Three things were noticeable, however: the beautiful arms of the girls, their deft footwork and the virile character-dancing of the men. The *corps* had precision and the chief Polovtsian warrior (Ivica Sertic) turned well. The young Circassian boys (sometimes called Polovtsian boys) were danced in this season by girls and greater in number than usual. Their *travesti* in no way hampered their performance, which was lively and precise. The costumes may have been correct in shape but they were of poor material, which gave them an air of cheapness. This was further emphasised by the slave girls being dressed in a particularly ugly pale turquoise.

Indigestible tragedy

The first full evening of ballet on January 26 unfortunately uncovered some of the faults which the *Igor* dances had so successfully hidden. It was with great anticipation that most people awaited the first performance in England of a ballet to Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* music. It is sad to relate that these hopes were dashed shortly after the curtain had risen. The Yugoslav version had choreography by Margarita Froman, who had seen Shakespeare's tragedy more as a mimed play than as a ballet. Without the beauty of poetry and with a score which, masterly enough, did not receive an adequate performance, the evening seemed to ramble on interminably.

Froman's idea of choreography hardly conformed to the standards expected in this country—she mixed a most limited classical vocabulary with unconvincing mime and a certain amount of so-called "expressive" movement. The mixture added up to a watery, indigestible and seemingly unending bowl of soup.

The natives of Verona capered with spirit but in manner and dress more suitable to Naples. The Capulet ball was a tedious party from which one imagines the guests would have scurried in haste—hardly an occasion to tempt gate-crashers. The male guests were involved in a vigorous sword dance which scarcely seemed suitable. The continual skirmishes between Montagues and Capulets were realistic and noisy in their clash of steel but not conceived with any choreographic pattern. Friar Laurence, though known to have been an ineffectual cleric, should surely have been a more effective stage personality.

But the tragedy stands or falls on the attraction, oblivious to all consequence, between the daughter and son of the opposing houses. If this is not conveyed, then this greatest of love-triumphing-over-all romances fails. Nenad Lhotka "hammed" Romeo which was probably the only thing to do in such a production. He strove valiantly to bring nobility to the role. Sonia Kastl's Juliet, though touching in its youthful freshness and innocence, went for nothing owing to lack of production and paucity of choreography.

I do not like to see a Juliet clambering down from her balcony in an undignified way if she is not going to have anything worthwhile to dance at the end of it. Again, the scene in Juliet's bedroom, the peak moment in the Soviet production (if films are a criterion), lacked any feeling of tenderness and unbridled passion—just a few simple and completely inexpressive steps.

If the dancing is going to be toned-down then the most magnificent mime must be substituted. Apart from two exceptions, the mime was of a primitive nature. The exceptions were the Nurse of Stefica Kis, who made her into a bawdy old dodderer rather on the lines of Edith Evans's never-to-be-forgotten interpretation, and the Mercutio of Milko Sparemblek.

This Mercutio was a well-conceived role from every point of view. Musically, Prokofiev has finely realised the "I am

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Choreography flows from him

The first night of *Danses Concertantes* (see opposite page) brought the name Kenneth Macmillan to the fore-front of new British choreographers. The promise he showed in his two previous works, for the Wells Choreographic Group, was completely realised.

Photo: Denis De Marney

KENNETH MACMILLAN, born in Dunfermline in 1930, was one of the original members of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. A scholarship pupil to the Sadler's Wells School, his entire training and career has been inside the Sadler's Wells Organisation. This is unique among British choreographers; another unusual possession is his excellent classical technique as a dancer. Apart from the gifted Frank Staff, British male choreographers have all tended to be mimes or character dancers.

Macmillan was with the Theatre Ballet for some years (at the same time as another promising young choreographer, Peter Darrell), but never danced leading roles until he was about to leave the company in 1948. Then he appeared in most of the classical leads and gave a brilliant performance in *Les Rendezvous*.

After he had joined the Sadler's Wells company he became grouped with three other male dancers of unusual promise, Philip Chatfield, Kenneth Melville and Gilbert Vernon. The first important role he danced at Covent Garden was the Florestan *pas de trois* (in which he has so far proved irreplaceable) and, in 1950, he created a part in Petit's *Ballabile* and the *pas de trois*, with Grey and Field, in Balanchine's *Ballet Imperial*. Later the same year he showed unusual talent for mime by taking over Helpmann's Ugly Sister in *Cinderella*. At the close of his period at Covent Garden he danced brilliantly in the *Giselle pas de deux*, and made his debut as the Bluebird.

During the summer of 1952 he appeared in a short season of ballets by John Cranko at Henley. Here he created the leading role in *Dancing*, a highly successful ballet to swing music by George Shearing, which may have had some influence on Macmillan's choreographic style.

Dissatisfied with the opportunities open to him at Covent Garden, he asked to return to the Theatre Ballet, and rejoined that company for the 1952 Edinburgh Festival.

During his second stay with the Theatre Ballet he has had many roles created for him, including the title-role in *The Great Detective*, the Moon in *Blood Wedding*, Moondog in *The Lady and the Fool*, and the *Pas de Trois* in *Café des Sports*. In addition he has appeared in such roles as Siegfried in *Swan Lake, Act* 2, *Les Sylphides*, Eusebius in *Carnaval*, Corydon and Damon in *Pastorale*, Captain Belaye in *Pineapple Poll*, *Les Rendezvous* and *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales*.

Despite his comparative success as a dancer, Macmillan never seemed content to confine his career to dancing alone. He was one of the pitifully few Sadler's Wells dancers to make a habit of watching performances by other companies. He showed an interest in ballet design and, under a pseudonym, designed some Peter Darrell ballets at Ballet Workshop and one for Festival Ballet. His talents as a designer were noted by Sophie Fedorovitch.

Feeling creatively frustrated, in 1953 David Poole, Macmillan, and a few other dancers from Sadler's Wells and Covent Garden organised the Sadler's Wells Choreographic Group which, with the help of Dame Ninette de Valois, gave Sunday performances of new ballets at the Sadler's Wells Theatre. At the first of these, on February 1, Macmillan produced *Somnambulism*, using music by Stan Kenton and Pete Rugelo. Danced by Maryon Lane, Poole and Macmillan himself, the work scored an instant success. Macmillan followed it in the next programme on June 14 with *Fragment*, a *pas de trois* in which Donald Britton first showed his possibilities as a "Macmillan" dancer.

Finally on January 24, 1954, Macmillan presented his first narrative work, *Laiderette*, to music by the Swiss composer Frank Martin. It was soon announced that *Laiderette* would be incorporated into the Theatre Ballet repertory, but for various reasons this did not prove possible. Macmillan later the same year produced Arnell's *Punch and the Child* for Television (*Somnambulism* had been televised previously) and started work on Stravinsky's *Le Baiser de la Fée*.

The orchestral demands of this score could not be met by the Sadler's Wells touring orchestra, so it was abandoned in favour of *Danses Concertantes*. Macmillan's future plans include a revival of *Laiderette* for the Ballet Rambert and another new work for the Theatre Ballet. He is also expected to return to the Theatre Ballet as a dancer in the near future.

C.B.

Zagreb in London

(continued from page 13)

peppered, I warrant, for this world. A plague o' both houses!" of Mercutio's dying speech, so much more movingly than the harsh violent end of Tybalt a few moments later. In these two contrasting death scenes, Froman has achieved her most satisfactory choreography in the whole ballet. It seemed a pity, though, that Mercutio had to die with such apparent finality before entering into his ultimate solo. It created rather the same impression that the Albrecht of Serge Lifar does when he gets up to take a call after he has fallen exhausted to the ground in the Paris Opéra *Giselle*.

In all fairness it should be said that some of the ensembles were well done, particularly when Juliet's attendants come to scatter flowers at her tomb. But these few moments in no way add up to a good ballet or anything like it. It remained for the score to give any feeling for the story.

Prokofiev has looked at the star-crossed lovers of Verona in a rather acid, dispassionate way. There is little of the Italian warmth or storm and stress which Tchaikovsky condensed into his short symphonic poem. It all seems rather quiet in spite of occasional noisy discordant passages for certain death moments such as that of Tybalt. Also one fails to see why there have to be references to his other works such as *The Love of the Three Oranges* and the *Classical Symphony*. Yet it is a most intelligent score which carefully has underlined the development of Shakespeare's text—the *leitmotiv* is used throughout. So carefully has it been developed that now, having heard it as a whole, I can see that it almost amounts to sacrilege to take any part out of context.

National spirit wins through

What perverse imp gets hold of people when they come to make up programmes? The anti-ballet imp did his work well with the Yugoslavs because after the unfortunate *Romeo and Juliet*, the public was disinclined to see anything other than the opera, *Prince Igor*. In keeping away they thus missed three quite charming ballets which derived from a national background —Froman's *The Gingerbread Heart* and her ballet at the end of the opera, *Ero the Joker*, together with Pia and Pino Mlakar's three-act work, *The Devil in the Village*.

All three were similar in their background of a village fair, all three ended with the inevitable Kolo, all three were most exhilarating and well danced by the company who seemed completely at home in works of this kind. They all had the naive freshness of *Oklahoma*! Had they been given early in the season instead of as an afterthought, the visit of this excellent company would have been a spectacular success.

The Gingerbread Heart is one of the earliest Yugoslav ballets to use national steps and idiom. It is a simple story of a young man who presents a girl with a heart of gingerbread and in a dream-sequence, to use cinema parlance, the gingerbread figures from a fair booth come to life. Apart from an interlude of dancing based on the classical vocabulary—for the boy's heart and the girl's heart—the rest is character work. Froman has worked with simple but theatrically effective groupings and ensembles.

A three-act work is still of certain importance in the world of the dance and when it has something which, to the simple English, is new, then such a work should be treated with respect. A village boy, again at a country fair, is shown temptation by the devil. But in the end the devil is conquered, good triumphs over evil, boy is restored to nice girl.

The Mlakars have ingeniously mixed modern dance movement with national character dances so cleverly that for all of the three acts the work seldom became boring—no small feat. Lhotka as the boy, in this and the previous ballet, was splendid and quite erased the impression left by his Romeo. Kastl also showed up to good advantage as the charming innocent girl.

We shall have more to say about this ballet next month. If the season did not open too auspiciously, these last home-grown works were enough to make us hope that the company will pay a return visit.

P.W.

DANSES CONCERTANTES

Donald Britton at the finish of his variation. **All photos: Denis de Marney**

First given by the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet at Sadler's Wells Theatre on January 18, 1955. Choreography by Kenneth Macmillan. Music, Igor Stravinsky. Décor and costumes, Nicholas Georgiadis.

MARYON LANE
DONALD BRITTON DAVID POOLE
SARA NEIL GILBERT VERNON ANNETTE PAGE
DONALD MACLEARY BRYAN LAWRENCE
PAULINE BARNES SHIRLEY BISHOP BRENDA BOLTON
YVONNE ENGLISH YVONNE LAKIER MARGARET LEE

CHOREOGRAPHY

KENNETH MACMILLAN, one senses, is triumphantly reacting against the forces of reaction. Brought up inside the walled garden of Sadler's Wells, disciplined within the fresh-bound tradition of the British National Ballet, fed on the fruits of English ballet classicism and mime-drama—he has revolted. Now lustily shouting his freedom, he has produced a work that appears to rest right outside the British "tradition" of ballet-making. This is an event of importance in more than one sense.

In this ballet, Macmillan's first full-scale venture, he has contented himself with displaying his personal idiom: the amazing thing is that he has a personal idiom to display. He is brilliantly inventive, gabbling out new movements with bewildering ease; if ever a young choreographer could claim, with Alexander Pope, to have "lisped in numbers," Macmillan is he.

His choreography, in this an ideal realisation of music that is dry and dusty with powdered diamonds, is an eccentric variant of classical dancing. The *danse d'école* is shorn of some of its familiar formal glories, and fused with the strange element that might derive from academic modern dance and ballroom jive. The smoothness of classical dancing is sharpened into angularity, its line is jarringly broken by separately articulated movements.

When dancers come together in *pas de deux*, instead of flowing together, they more often fly apart—the girl twists violently in supported *pirouettes*, sometimes sinking on her point as she turns, contacts are sudden and fleeting.

Macmillan often uses the point-work of the girls in a manner that might be called percussive, the points stab at the ground as though it were an enemy, at other times he disregards points altogether. There is an emphasis on off-balance movements that have their own harmony. The limbs tend to be used as simple spiky extensions, while the movement's expression is derived from the torso.

Not all, perhaps not most, of Macmillan's choreographic originality will come as a surprise to those who saw its earlier energetic flutterings at the Spartan soirées held by the Sadler's Wells Choreographic Group. His choreography in the present work is only an extension or a fulfilment of past tendencies. Yet originality is not enough if it is merely a reflection of puerile idiosyncrasy. Any fool can be original if originality is to present movement on the stage that hitherto no one else has considered worth the presenting. But Macmillan's choreography is not only new, it is worthwhile. In *Danses Concertantes* he has

The group which opens and closes the ballet. L. to R.: Bryan Lawrence, Sara Neil, David Poole, Maryon Lane, Gilbert Vernon, Annette Page, Donald Macleary. Britton on floor.

set his sights fairly low (and hit his target) but the dancing shows, following the music's capricious moods, that it can convey witty and even tragic overtones.

Danses Concertantes is fatter with promise than achievement. Macmillan's grouping is often slick and a little obvious, his opening and closing groups have a spurious sparkle more appropriate to a clever revue routine. His dances are too fragmentary, like splintered glass, (which, like them, is also frequently beautiful) and there are far too many exits and entrances. Of more importance is his failure to build up to big moments. Time and time again he appears to promise us a grand statement of dance and each time he sends us away with nothing more than a gracefully-turned phrase. In many works this would not matter, but the plotless ballet is a form that demands a climax, which in this work never really comes. In all fairness many of these "faults" must be attributed to Macmillan faithfully reflecting Stravinsky's music.

Tomorrow to fresh woods, and pastures new: Macmillan needs now the same opportunities as were given to Cranko. Sadler's Wells has seen its first entirely local boy make good, yet his final testing must come in his next half-dozen or so ballets, and, in a sense, the National Ballet is as much on trial as the choreographer. Macmillan has talent which, if properly used, can add quite a few paragraphs, and probably an important chapter to the history of British ballet.

DANCING

ONCE in a while one has the privilege of watching a performance that seems inspired, one in which every dancer is filling out the complete potentiality of his or her respective role. This is a rare experience, and yet I had just such an impression with the first performance of *Danses Concertantes*.

First one must mention the remarkable Maryon Lane, who in the course of the past 18 months has developed into one of the most interesting and rewarding dancers in British ballet. Her confident precision, her *savoir faire*, her alert individuality, have all been faithfully served by her choreographer, and she repaid him with a dazzling performance.

David Poole, going through the ballet like a mournful Picasso *saltimbanque*, partnered and danced with easy mastery. Donald Britton, like Lane and Poole, has also been given unusually good opportunities. His grotesque solo was brilliantly executed and showed a new side to his fine talents. The other soloists, Sara Neil, Annette Page and Gilbert Vernon, all danced with the spontaneous air of pleasure that pervaded the whole performance. The remaining dancers were equally admirable.

I do not think that the ballet could ever be better danced than it was on its first performance.

Clive Barnes.

MUSIC

FROM both aesthetic and technical points of view, the setting of Stravinsky's *Danses Concertantes* as a ballet must be about as tricky an assignment ever to be tackled by an apprentice choreographer. *The Rite of Spring* had even greater problems of uneven bar lengths and rhythmic counterpoint—but then Nijinsky had Marie Rambert, Stravinsky and Diaghilev to help, and a ready-made "programme" besides.

A kind of concerto grosso for 24 instruments, the *Danses Concertantes* is in Stravinsky's latter-day dessicated neo-classic idiom and was first performed by the Jannsen Symphony Orchestra in Los Angeles in February, 1942, with the composer conducting. Although produced as a ballet in September, 1944, the music gives practically no indication of having been

Left: Sara Neil, Gilbert Vernon and Annette Page in the pas de trois *which has an unusual ending with the two girls being slid off-stage* en arabesque *as in this picture.*

Right: Maryon Lane and David Poole in the pas de deux *which uses some interesting lifts.*

Another group towards the end of the ballet in which Maryon Lane uses her fingers like spectacles.

Bottom right: Full-stage picture of Danses Concertantes *showing Nicholas Georgiadis' setting.*

conceived as such: there is little or no attempt at establishing a definite mood or conveying emotion of any kind.

Even though the five movements are inscribed *March, Pas d'action, Thème varié, Pas de Deux, March* and contain some suggestion of stylised parody (along the lines of *Le Baiser de la Fée and Scènes de Ballet,* but to a much lesser extent) of the traditions of 19th-century ballet music, the joke is too wry and obscure and the *Danses* are fundamentally a chamber work, plotless and "absolute" in scope and expression.

Something of a minor masterpiece of ingenious craftsmanship, the music limits its appeal exclusively to the ear and mind, in the writing's main attractions of skilful blending of instrumental tones, harmonic interplay and unceasing variety of rhythmic invention.

Matching Stravinsky in virtuosity, Kenneth Macmillan's choreography showed a firm grasp of the music's basic structure, and, with the help of his obviously well-drilled cast, at no time quarrelled with its bewildering complexities of rhythm and metre.

If the ballet is somewhat lacking in point, that is because the choreographer has chosen, perhaps unwisely, to work within limits imposed by music which for all its incredible dexterity has precious little to say. On the opening night the orchestra gave a reasonably efficient but by no means polished performance. **David Hunt**

DECOR

LAST month, when writing about the designing of Ashton's *Variations on a Theme of Purcell*, I bemoaned the fact that abstract ballets were so often designed with lack of distinction. This remark applied, of course, to the British ballet repertoire; foreign repertoires have, on the whole, succeeded admirably. Apart from the works so beautifully designed by the late Sophie Fedorovitch and some by Kenneth Rowell, only imported designers have brought beauty and intelligence to abstract works on the British stage—Bérard to Massine's *Clock Symphony*, Beaurepaire to Ashton's *Scènes de Ballet*.

In spite of the fact that what ultimately transpired in the latter ballet was quite different from what was originally intended, there is no doubt that Beaurepaire's designs underlined the mood of Stravinsky's score; this grand apotheosis in a strange deserted ruin of former magnificence could be interpreted as the spectator wished.

Now we have another foreign designer designing to a Stravinsky score and again the ballet is of an abstract nature and its intention can be interpreted at will.

The Greek designer, Nicholas Georgiadis, has seen the work as a youthful dance concert, with a suggestion of improvisation, taking place in a palace of fantasy bearing no relation to anything we know and which—because fantasy is so often nearer the truth than the accepted idea of truth—appears to be a plausible occasion He has said that his aim has been to bring visual realisation to the music, and in this no mean task (particularly in a Stravinsky score) he has been almost completely successful.

The ballet was originally given by Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1944 with Balanchine choreography and designs by Eugene Berman but unfortunately this version was never seen in England. A study of Berman's designs reveals a slight similarity to those of Georgiadis—rather inconsequential lines and decoration and the use of highly coloured costumes against a simply coloured setting (Berman's setting appears to be almost black and white). Here any resemblance ends yet I would say that both designers have been equally successful in their relationship with the music and choreography.

The new setting is blue and green with dark overtones and architectural features sketched in black. The setting is saved from heaviness by occasional vague patches of pale pink or orange. Small winged sphinxes are scattered throughout and used to form the backs of the six chairs ranged across the stage. Against this the costumes—in burnt umber, turquoise, chartreuse, blue, orange and black—glow with luminosity. The colours have been used with a subtlety that does not tire the audience, the designs never at any moment obscure the pattern of the choreography but in many instances enhance it.

Georgiadis's sense of colour is exciting and stimulating and the whole thing has ineffable *chic*. Possibly the *chic* has been a bit overdone in the case of the men's costumes—black jet chokers and miniature glittering pyramids on their heads give them an androgynous air. On the other hand these all-over tights for the men are among the best of such designs that I have seen, and the lines of black arrows scattered over them appear to have been arranged with a sense of human anatomy. Again, the black urchin-cut wigs worn by all the dancers are more suitable to the girls, on whom they look well.

The introduction of this designer to ballet makes a most welcome addition to the list of those working in England; and we look forward to his next work with eager anticipation. There is no doubt that the Theatre Ballet now has by far the best designed ballets of any British company today. **Peter Williams**

curtain up!

An unusual scene from Die Fledermaus. *Ludmilla Tcherina, the French ballerina, in a bath scene in the film version of the Strauss opera, now called* Oh! Rosalinda, *being made at Elstree.*

Photo: Keystone

UP TOO SOON

CURTAIN up—too soon—recently caused consternation at the Sadler's Wells Theatre. The front cloth of *The Lady and the Fool* disappeared while the prologue was still being played out and revealed the astonished guests already assembled for the ball in the next scene. A most disconcerting situation which was carried off by the aplomb and seeming imperturbability of all the dancers on stage.

The opposite situation arose at a performance by the same company's *Carte Blanche* shortly after that. The front cloth remained firmly down after the prologue and Johaar Mosaval had to return and improvise a second variation to cover the gap.

There are some ballets, of course, which might even be improved by keeping the curtains closed all the time. We recall the remark of a neighbour at a recent performance of a distinguished foreign company's least inspired offering. "That ballet has one superb moment," he declared, "that is when the red velvet tabs meet in front of the stage at the end. The most welcome sight for a long time."

DOWN ON DIAGHILEV

CURTAIN down on the Diaghilev Exhibition at Forbes House came with Diaghilev's last potential ballerina having the last word (she also had the first, when she opened it in Edinburgh). Alicia Markova told about the time when she first joined the company and of the remarkable way in which Diaghilev ruled over his kingdom. Short tributes came also from Lydia Sokolova, Marie Rambert and Lady Juliet Duff (whose mother was mainly responsible for bringing the Diaghilev Ballet to London). Richard Buckle talked about the humours attendant upon the organisation of such an exhibition. The speakers and audience appeared to be visibly moved both by the occasion and the fact that this great exhibition, which has brought many personalities of the Diaghilev company together after so many years, was finally over.

THEY CAME WITH FLOWERS

BERYL GREY'S return to dancing was marked by something not often seen in London: the showering of the Covent Garden stage by flowers thrown from above.

Needless to say, the demonstration was not entirely spontaneous—nobody comes to the Opera House with a veritable florist's shop hidden about his person by chance and then hurls them unpremeditatedly on to the stage in a fit of enthusiasm. The flowers were, in fact, thrown by admirers from the gallery (sitting in the amphitheatre slips on this occasion to gain a better vantage point) who had clubbed together to buy a very large bouquet for the ballerina. A touching gesture of the very real affection London-born Beryl Grey inspires in many of the audience.

THE HOLDENS FOR S.A.

WE are all sorry to hear that Stanley Holden is retiring from dancing. Formerly a member of the main Wells company when his biggest role was Puss-in-Boots in *The Sleeping Beauty*, he went to the Theatre Ballet in its early days and soon established himself as a mime and character dancer of great talent.

He made a most engaging Dr. Coppelius in *Coppelia*, triumphantly solved that most difficult problem of portraying a bore on the stage without boring the audience as an Elderly Gentleman in Howard's *Assembly Ball*, brought a new angle to that bibulous Mr. O'Reilly in *The Prospect Before Us* and created the moonstruck witch Agnes in *Selina*. These and many other roles were given with an intelligence and sense of theatre which made him one of the most endearing features of the Theatre Ballet's performances. He could have been a great clown of the Music Hall.

Holden's retirement, enforced by a recent injury, is fortunately not a complete withdrawal from ballet. Together with his wife, Stella Farrance—also for long a very useful member of the same company—he has sailed for South Africa, where they will open a school in Johannesburg. Good luck and prosperity to them both. Let us hope that their school will add to the already formidable list of talent to emerge from South Africa.

ANOTHER BALLET DESIGNER DIES

THIS winter has taken a heavy toll of ballet designers. Since December we have recorded the deaths of E. McKnight Kauffer, Henri Matisse and Robert Edmund Jones. On February 19, George Kirsta died in London.

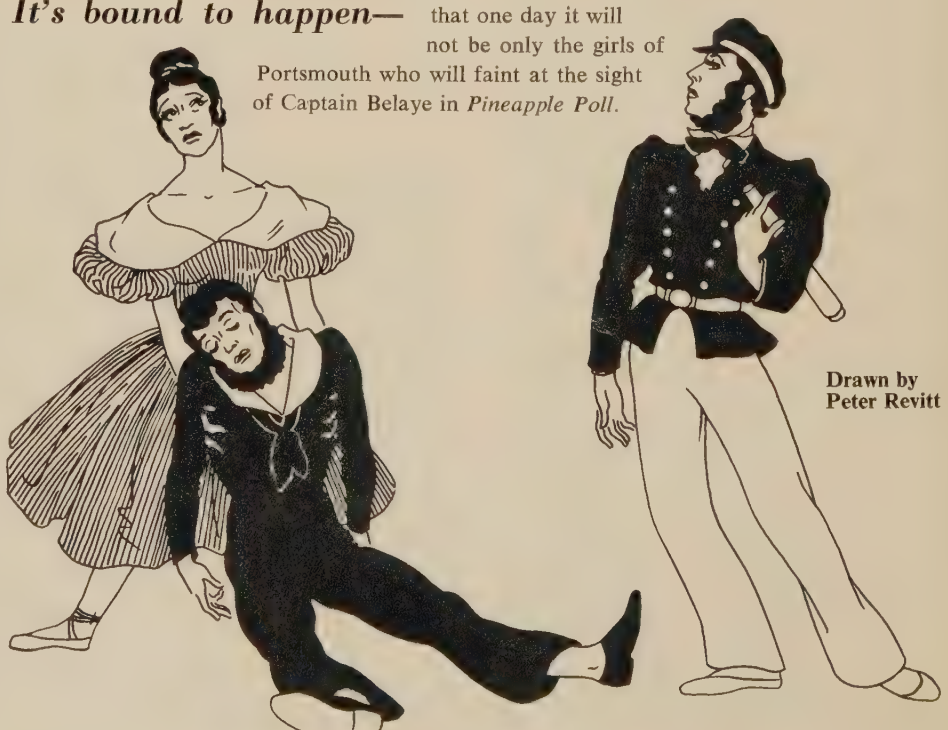
Kirsta will be remembered in this country as a ballet designer, firstly for the Markova-Dolin Ballet and later for the Metropolitan Ballet, for which he was for some time Artistic Director and designed, among other ballets, Frank Staff's *Lovers' Gallery*.

He designed several ballets for Festival Ballet, including *The Nutcracker*. He was next associated, as Artistic Director, with the revived Original Ballet Russe, for a short period before it disbanded. More recently he was Artistic Director of and designer for the ill-fated Ballet Comique.

ALWAYS ALICIA

OUR apologies to Alicia Markova and also to readers of our recent "Thirty Years of Markova" number. We said that before Markova was re-named by Diaghilev her name was Alice Marks. This mistake has been perpetuated over the years and the error has now become accepted. Two people who knew here in her early youth always

It's bound to happen— that one day it will not be only the girls of Portsmouth who will faint at the sight of Captain Belaye in *Pineapple Poll*.



Drawn by Peter Revitt

refer to her as 'Alice'—Dame Ninette de Valois and Arnold Haskell in his book *Balletomania* (from which we quoted in that issue). Of all the copy we received, only Cyril W. Beaumont referred to her as Alicia when she was a young girl. In our ignorance we altered his to fit in with the rest. For the benefit of audiences and writers in the future—Markova was named "Lilian Alicia Marks."

OUR TRANSPARENT THOUGHTS

WE commented recently, in these columns, on the wording of the line included in the Covent Garden programmes about the number of previous performance of any work. After the magazine had gone to press this wording was changed and now refers explicitly to performances "by the Sadler's Wells Ballet at the Royal Opera House." Thus meeting the suggestion we made.

It seems that the Covent Garden authorities must be able to read our thoughts—but not all the time, we hope!

CRITICS ALL IN A ROW

A RED INDIAN with a bow and arrow and a dislike of ballet critics could, had he felt so disposed, have severely affected English ballet criticism with one shot. At the Stoll Theatre recently, Arnold Haskell, Cyril Beaumont, Richard Buckle and Peter Williams were all placed next to each other in the same row. Usually critics are scattered through the theatre as far from each other as possible. Presumably on this occasion the management thought it would have its own private joke. Those sitting near got great amusement from watching each of the critics trying not to reveal his reactions to the ballet in question. The first to wilt was Buckle, who asked to have his seats moved after the first act, Haskell vanished after the second act, Beaumont and Williams stuck it out together until the end.

BIG AUNTIE'S WATCHING YOU

"THE dear old aunt of St. James's Square," is how W. E. Williams, Secretary-General of the Arts Council, recently referred to the council he represents. He gave warning that "the dear old aunt is prepared to put the screws on those she supports so that they will put the screws on the customers."

The subsidy at Covent Garden amounts to some £500 for each performance—about five shillings a seat. This means that if you sit in the gallery you are paying less than half the full cost of your seat; even if you habitually sit in a box you are heavily subsidised.

One ray of hope in the otherwise gloomy prospect of possible future price increases—all profits at the bars are included in the income to be set against costs. So drink heavily in the intervals and you will be helping us all!

DANCING HIGH-JUMPERS

LAST month we gave news of tennis players who study ballet to improve their play. Now we hear that Olympic high-jumpers have been investigating the possibility of ballet training to help their technique; they even held a conference attended by Fonteyn, Somes and Idzikowski.

An apt comment came from Dolin, who considers that the benefit of greater co-operation between dancers and athletes might not be entirely a one-way affair. "Athletes," he remarked, "could teach our male dancers to have more guts and stamina."

DIPLOMATS' LADIES

WE have often stated that if anyone could be called the successor of Madame Karsavina that person is Margot Fonteyn. Both ballerinas have a remarkable range. Now they have even more in common: both have been married to diplomats. Karsavina was married to Henry Bruce. Fonteyn's husband, Dr. Roberto Arias has now been appointed Panamanian Ambassador in London.

In spite of rumours that have been flying around since the Sadler's Wells Ballet returned from their last American tour, it was only two days before the wedding that the engagement was made public. One of the first pictures published of Fonteyn with Dr. Arias was in the September *Dance and Dancers* (when we deliberately did not publish his name). Since then this picture by Lido, has been splurged across most of the daily papers.

At a recent press conference, Fonteyn made it quite clear that she has no present intention of retiring from dancing.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER

WITH the sound of angry crowds outside the window demonstrating against the re-armament of Germany, the first official committee meeting of the Pavlova Commemoration 1956 was held. Philip Richardson, O.B.E., was elected as chairman and Cyril W. Beaumont as treasurer. Others on the committee include Arnold Haskell, Richard Buckle, Arthur Franks, Peter Williams and members of Madame Pavlova's company. Further announcements of plans to commemorate the twenty-five years since Pavlova's death will be announced in the next issue. Anyone interested in associating themselves with the commemoration should write to: the Hon. Secretary, Miss Rita Glynde, 131 Harley Street, W.1.

TRUTH AT LAST

ONE of our readers was surprised, when visiting a Christmas play at the Fortune Theatre, to find a slip of paper dropping out of her programme which declared, "The part of the Ogre is now being played by Peter Williams." Her friend's comment was, "Well, I always knew it but I never expected to see it in print." Confusion has often been caused by the fact that a well-known actor and the editor of *Dance and Dancers* have the same name.

happy birthday to...

		Mar.
Valerie Marsh	Ballet Rambert	7
Maurice Metliss	Film. *Oh! Rosalinda*	8
Sheilagh Henderson	Royal Winnipeg Ballet	9
Tamara Karsavina		10
Eva von Genscy	Royal Winnipeg Ballet	11
Ursula Moreton	Sadler's Wells Organisation	13
Pirmin Trecu	Sadler's Wells Ballet	13
Igor Youskevitch	Ballet Theatre	13
Deirdre Dixin	Sadler's Wells Ballet	14
Walter Trevor	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	17
Josephine Gordon	In revue in Italy	23
Rowena Jackson	Sadler's Wells Ballet	24
Lucia Chase	Ballet Theatre	24
Marina Katronis	Royal Winnipeg Ballet	25
Walter Burgess	Dancing in Canada	26
Joan Harris	Teaching in Germany	26
Liane Plane	Ballet Theatre	26
Leonide Massine		26
Jon Waks	Festival Ballet	27
Madeleine White	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	29
Jeffrey Kovel	Festival Ballet	29
Margaret Black	Ballet Theatre	31
		Apr.
Shirley Bishop	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	1
Leo Kersley	Teaching in Holland	1
Sheilah O'Reilly	Sadler's Wells Organisation	2
Edward Caton	Ballet Theatre	3
Lydia Sokolova		4
Antony Tudor	Choreographer with Ballet Theatre	4
Maureen Andrews	Grand Ballet Marquis de Cuevas	5
Dorothea Zaymes	Sadler's Wells Ballet	6
Keith Lester	Windmill Theatre	9
Avril Navarre	Sadler's Wells Ballet	9

Dancer you will know

Photo: Denis de Marney

SARA NEIL

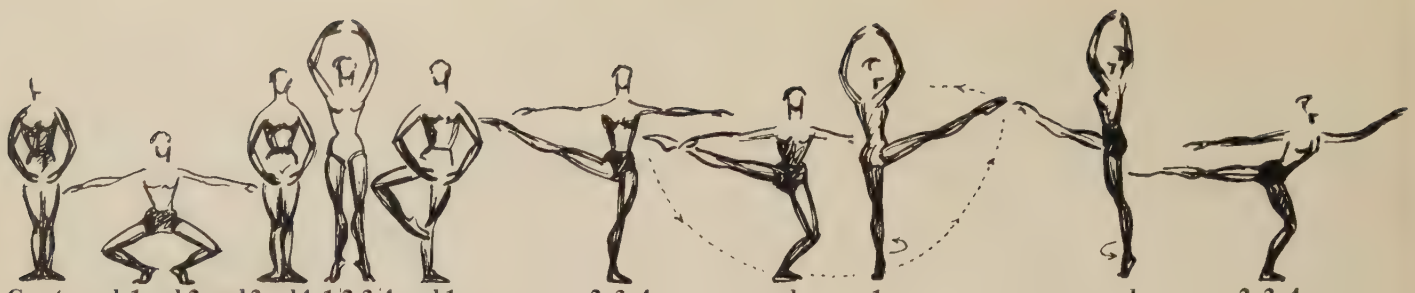
Born in Wellington, New Zealand. Educated at Wellington Girls' College, starting dancing at the age of six. Took R.A.D. examinations in New Zealand before coming to England in 1950, *where she studied at the Sadler's Wells School for one year. Joined Theatre Ballet in May,* 1951, *under the name of Doreen Brown.*

Creations: Pas de Trois *in* Café des Sports; *Soloist in* Danses Concertantes. *Leading roles: Leading Swan in* Swan Lake; *Dawn in* Coppelia; *Waltz in* Sylphides; *"Markova" role in* Les Rendezvous; *Polka in* Façade; *Alicia and Beatrice in* The Haunted Ballroom.

SARA NEIL'S career, like that of many a young dancer, has not run with especial smoothness. She first came to prominence just before the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet's American tour. One of her early roles was that of the Beach Siren in Somes' *Summer Interlude,* when she gave a performance notable for its wit and sophistication, qualities not usually found in a young soloist. Later she also showed considerable promise as Dawn in *Coppelia.*

Having thus early marked herself out as a dancer of some potentiality, for a time her work seemed rather disappointing. She danced the leading role in *Les Rendezvous,* for which her technique and personality appeared unsuited.

At the end of last season she gave a good portrayal of Alicia in *Haunted Ballroom;* this season, after an early minor injury, she has been dancing extremely well.



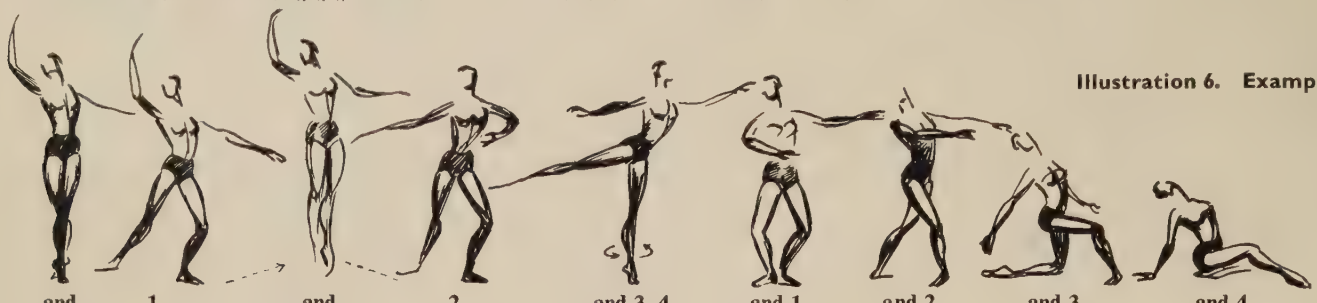


Illustration 6. Example E.

STEPS OF THE DANCE 18

by

BARBARA VERNON and JOHN GREGORY

Illustrated by EILEAN PEARCEY

Centre-work: The Adage cont.:

Second Study. (Typical *enchaînement: Not* set exercise).

Example E. (See illustration No. 36). Stand in 1st position. Full *plié*, lifting arms outward to 4th position. Rise on to *demies pointes*, lowering arms to 1st position and up through 2nd to 3rd position. As the heels are lowered to the floor the arms open outwards and are lowered through 4th position to 1st position. Pick up working leg through *sur le cou de pied* to *passé* position, and *developpé à la seconde*, opening arms to 4th position. *Plié; grand fouetté en tournant sur la demie-pointe*, carrying arms to 3rd position. *Plié en arabesque éffacé; relevé* to 5th position, forward arm to 4th position, rear arm to 3rd, (becoming forward arm). *Tombé, chassé en éffacé; pirouette en arabesque en dedans;* brush working leg through 1st position *en plié* to 4th position *croisé;* kneel on back leg, lowering arms to the side; recline in sitting position, arms behind back (5th position) hands on floor, head thrown back.

Example F. (Not illustrated). *Plié* in 1st position with rise on to *demie-pointe*, as in previous *enchaînement*. Pick up working leg to *passé*, and *developpé* 4th position *en l'air* front, arms opening to 4th position. Brush working leg through 1st position to *arabesque en face en plié. Grande ronde de jambe en dedans*, rising from *plié* to straight leg, lifting arms to 3rd position. Stop in *éffacé* front; turn away from extended leg into *attitude éllongée;* hold balance on *demie-pointe. Tombé* to 4th position, *croisé en avant, coupé* under, *soutenu en tournant en dehors; tombé* to 4th position *croisé* again, *Piqué pirouette en dehors;* finishing 5th position behind, *croisé, en plié;* clasp hands behind back, turn palms downwards, pull shoulders well down with stretched arms; rise on *demies-pointes*. Hold pose.

Analysis of steps and movements relating to the above Enchaînements

Tombé. A drop on to one leg *en plié*, with transference of the body's weight.

Chassé. Like *Tombé*, but must glide along the floor.

Chassé en avant (forwards). A pleasing way to start *chassé* is with a *sisol* (hop) on the back leg, making a *petit developpé* with the forward leg to *tombé*. As the weight of the body is transferred on to the forward leg, it glides along the floor *en plié*. With a push from the floor (sprung *coupé*) the rear leg catches the forward leg *en l'air* in 5th position, both legs fully stretched, the rear leg returning to the floor, *en plié*, and the forward leg again sliding along the floor.

Chassé en arrière. (backwards). The same procedure in reverse. With *sisol* on the front leg, *petit developpé* with the back leg to *tombé*, weight of body transferred to back leg which glides along the floor, *en plié*. With push from the floor front leg catches the rear leg *en l'air* in 5th position both legs fully stretched, the front leg returning to the floor *en plié*, the back leg again sliding along the floor.

Chassé en éffacé and en croisé. Performed on the diagonal, introduces the most beautiful line whether travelling forwards or backwards. In *chassé en effacé* the head looks out over the forward shoulder, the forward arm is held in 3rd position the rear arm in 4th position. In *chassé en croisé*, the head is again looking out over the forward shoulder, forward arm to 4th position; rear arm is in 3rd position.

Soutenu en tournant en dehors. (see also Article 7—*Barre*-work). *Plié* on supporting leg. Extended leg is brought in from any open position, with a circular movement to 5th position behind supporting leg rising to *demies-pointes*, (or *pointes*); the body leaning slightly over the supporting leg, with arms gathering from 4th position to 1st position where they may remain, or they may be carried up to 3rd position, as the body turns on both legs, fully stretched, towards the back leg, which on completion of the turn becomes automatically the front leg, and over which the slight lean of the body is transferred. To facilitate a smooth and neat movement, the working leg has to swivel a little over the floor, to fit precisely into 5th position front; finishing *en plié*, both arms opening to 4th position.

Grande ronde de jambe is the carrying of the extended leg *en rond* from one open position to another. (See Article 11—*Barre*-work).

Grande ronde de jambe en dehors. The working leg is carried turned out and fully stretched from 4th position *en l'air* front, by way of *à la seconde* to 4th position *en l'air* back. The height of the extension is increased with the movement, (hips giving slightly to allow turn-out and high extension). Supporting leg and body must be held straight and firm. The arms are carried from 4th position forward, up to 3rd, opening again to 4th position. Variations of arms may also be introduced, according to finishing position, viz.: *éffacé* or *croisé*. May also be performed *en plié*.

Grande ronde de jambe en dedans. The working leg is carried from 4th position *en l'air* back, by way of *à la seconde*, to 4th position *en l'air* front. From the commencement of the movement the working leg lifts from the hip socket, and the turn-out is carefully maintained, with the body very erect. Arms are carried from 4th position up to 3rd or may be varied according to the finishing position, viz.: *éffacé or croisé*, or *en face*. May be performed on straight supporting leg, or *en plié*.

Grand fouetté en tournant en dedans usually commences with the working-leg *à la seconde;* arms in 4th position. With *plié* on supporting leg, the working leg sweeps through the 1st position to make *grand battement croisé* front, as supporting leg rises to *demie-pointe* (or *pointe*), the arms being simultaneously carried up to 3rd position. The body turns in this position; the head looks to the front corner to which the working leg was thrown. At a point, either *croisé* back or *éffacé* back, the extended leg remains, while the body continues the turn, finishing with a snap movement *en arabesque croisé* or *éffacé en plié*, forward arm to 2nd position, other arm to 4th position. To facilitate the balance during the turn the working leg is gripped very tightly in the hip socket.

Grand pirouette en arabesque en dedans. Whether taken from 4th position *éffacé* or *croisé*, the mechanics of this *pirouette* are the same. (It may also commence from 5th position or from *tombé* or *piqué* in 4th position). Standing in 4th position, *plié* on forward leg with whole weight of body over leg; hips well forward; forward arm in 2nd position other arm in 4th position. The impetus is felt mainly in the shoulders, which are relaxed and held flat and square to the direction the body is facing; this impetus is co-ordinated with a strong push from the floor by the heel of supporting leg which rises to *demie-pointe* (or *pointe*) as the rear-leg is lifted *en l'air*, the arm in 2nd position simultaneously extending forward at eye level with palm downwards; the body turning towards supporting leg. This *pirouette* should have the quality of a large swinging movement. The arms reach out giving a feeling of breadth; the supporting leg is held as firm as a pedestal over which the arc of the body tilts. A strong tension is felt in the back, and a tightness or grip should be felt in the hip of the raised leg. If taken from *éffacé* the head would spot to the corner; if taken from *croisé* it would spot front. From either starting position, instead of spotting, the head may be carried round with the body. In the latter case an extra smooth execution may be obtained, and is perhaps preferable. The *arabesque* turn

(continued on Page 30)

WHAT CAN BE DONE WITH THE WORKSHOP?

by DAVID ELLIS

Last month Clive Barnes drew attention to the dangers threatening the valuable Ballet Workshop. David Ellis, director of the Workshop, replies with possible solutions to the problems.

MOST of the points made by Clive Barnes, as an independent observer, have occurred to us, as directors, over this last year. An excellent record in the past will not provide a policy for the future. With the great advantages inherent in using the Mercury Theatre (which will be increased when we move to the larger theatre about to be built) we can almost balance our budgets, completely fill our houses and continue to enrol new members. What is the best use to which we can put Ballet Workshop in the future?

It seems unlikely that we will ever be faced with a dearth of designers, composers, musicians, painters or sympathetic dressmakes, but our original policy (free enterprise for all who can show professional competence) can only continue to succeed if there is a reasonable supply of new and talented choreographers.

In four years we have presented the works of over 40 choreographers and while there may be several others who have escaped the lures or nets of Ballet Workshop, there may not be enough left free to ensure the preparation of regular monthly programmes for our members. In other words we have already enabled many of this country's free choreographers to express themselves. (It is because of this that Mr. Barnes feels that most of our really important work would appear to have been done in the first two years).

From our point of view a free choreographer has come to mean one who is not attached to any of the Sadler's Wells group of companies. This group possessed its own closed organisation to discover its talents, and its general commitments were such as to preclude any participation outside the group. A dancer who has never worked in a permanent ballet company, learning and performing the ballets of famous choreographers is, as Mr. Barnes points out, unlikely to make a serious choreographer. (All our "discoveries" had had years of experience in one or other of the major companies). The Sadler's Wells group of companies control about 80 per cent of the experienced dancers in England. This has meant that not more than 20 per cent could ever take advantage of the opportunities offered by Ballet Workshop and that over the last four years it is the work of these 20 per cent that has been shown.

The possibilities before us in 1955 include the following:—

1. We can concentrate on the choreographers whose work for Ballet Workshop has proved their value. We can present several programmes of these ballets and hope that the major companies will ultimately see their worth and commission new works. So far eight of our ballets have passed into the repertoires of permanent companies and five have been commissioned from artists whose work had first received serious recognition at Ballet Workshop.
2. Give performances whenever a programme can be made up from the works of the few new choreographers available. The established Ballet Workshop choreographers would naturally continue to contribute to these programmes.
3. Find some way to increase the percentage of experienced dancers available and arrange programmes accordingly. When we first planned Ballet Workshop we imagined an organisation on a much broader basis than the one that has now become established. We saw a production unit presenting the works of choreographers from *all* companies, and perhaps from abroad as well. We saw experimental ballets being shown. We saw managements taking an interest in the work and actively participating by availing themselves of the opportunities to try out new dancers or choreographers, designers and composers. We saw a co-operative effort which might have had a startling effect on ballet generally. In spite of prodigious efforts by many people who believed in the idea, not all of this has come to pass. Success we have had, but not enough along the broad lines we had expected. (Curiously, it has been the dancers who have appeared in the programmes who have benefited most immediately. The list of these now working in established companies or musicals is the largest of our rolls of honour!)
4. Abandon the emphasis that we have always laid on finding new choreographers, and concentrate on evolving new techniques for presentation as suggested by Clive Barnes. There are two objections to this policy. The first is that we very much doubt if it is possible to be consciously experimental without being pretentious. The second is that for this kind of work the need for experienced choreographers is paramount. While this policy might lead to some very interesting works, programmes of this nature might be irregular.
5. Look further afield. It may be possible to arrange programmes of the works of foreign choreographers, though the difficulties and expenses would here preclude any hope of such programmes being frequent.
6. Press on regardless.

Of all these alternatives, No. 3 is still our ideal, and though each of the others could provide valuable variety to a policy based on this one, they might not on their own (except in the case of No. 6) justify the vast amount of hard work and generous help that has to go into such an organisation. There may be other solutions to our problems. Any suggestions will be gratefully received!

SPEAK UP

It must go on

SIR—Of course Ballet Workshop must continue and if it is in financial difficulties why not a grant from the Arts Council? They are always crying out for progress in the arts but do so little to support it. Or, failing that why not grants from each of the major ballet companies who in the end are bound to benefit from this development of choreographers, designers, etc.

If thus supported, Ballet Workshop would then be able to pay the wages of young, talented dancers who have at present to turn away from this field to to that of variety as a means of livelihood.

I feel that all our major companies are so wound up in themselves and their own importance as to shut their eyes to the future and any forms of progress. We need new ballets and they will only be obtained through the continuation of an organisation like Ballet Workshop where the development of future choreographers can be allowed to grow without the swamping effect that a full ballet company would have on such people. RENNY LISTER

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ABOVE: A scene from one of the most controversial of Ballet Workshop's productions—Michael Holmes' Palisades. *Michel de Lutry is seen as the prisoner. The work was horrifying in the way it conveyed the monotony and demoralising effect of prison life.*

RIGHT: Paula Hinton and Walter Gore in a choreographic version of Monteverdi's opera Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda.

Photos: Paul Wilson

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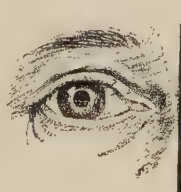

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NEW BOOKS

Big drum beat

S. Hurok presents the World of Ballet by S. Hurok. (Robert Hale, 18/–).

"BEAT out dat rhythm on a drum" sings Pearl Bailey in the Lillas Pastia-up-to-date scene from the film of *Carmen Jones*. For some reason I found these absurd lines which have been attached to Bizet's *Chanson Bohème* beating maddeningly though not inappropiately through my brain as I read Sol Hurok's book. Though the drum beats long and loud for Hurok Attractions Inc. (which is what the boy from Pogar's industry has now developed into), there are many little human anecdotes breaking through like the welcome tinkle of a triangle.

The dance world of America has reason to be grateful to this mighty impresario; he has brought them everything from Pavlova to Fonteyn, touring them from Atlantic to Pacific to the mutual benefit of artist, audience and occasionally, no doubt, himself. Oddly enough the most vital character to pop up through the pages, like some intelligent commedienne, is our own Dame Ninette de Valois. He has really 'got her' as aunts would say about some singularly photographic piece of brush-work. How well I can imagine her momentary fury at being refused admission through the pass-door of the San Francisco Opera House. She got her revenge on Hurok by tugging at his coat tails whenever she wanted to speak to him.

". . . . When you want to speak to me," I said, "must you pull my coat off my back?"

"The next time I shall do it harder," she said with her very individual little laugh. "Don't you think we have been here long enough? . . . Come along now, take us home."

Actually the parts about the Sadler's Wells Ballet are not of great interest to English readers; they virtually amount to an elaborated press hand-out. It would also be idle to pretend that the World of Ballet as seen by Hurok is not slightly coloured by his business relationship with it at the time the book was written; an impresario's memories are not expected to be otherwise. But he is remarkably fair and candid and there are many reasons why the book is no mean addition to ballet literature if only to underline the fact that an impresario's lot is not a happy one. It could only be a love of the dance, for instance, that would make anyone touch it again with the proverbial barge-pole after they had argued night and day for three weeks with the Caucasian 'Colonel' about an Original Ballet Russe season, only to be rewarded with the loss of a fortune at the end of it all. Though I find it hard to imagine why anyone who has loved ballet for so long would not know that people do not visit ballerinas in their dressing-rooms shortly before an important performance; it is a universally known rule of the theatre. Hurok deserved all he got from Fonteyn when he tried to break into her dressing-room in Chicago to wish her luck.

Magnificent Chameleon

Jean Cocteau by Margaret Crossland. (Peter Nevill, 15/–).

EVERYTHING that Jean Cocteau touches—literary, visual or inspirational—instantly acquires a magic bloom as though it has been brushed by the wing of some exotic butterfly. He was once labelled Enfant Terrible, now he is generally recognised as a prophet in his own land. Diaghilev's all-seeing prophetic eye must have recognised his potentiality immediately; there is no doubt that it was Cocteau's influence that turned the Russian Ballet into the channel it followed after the first great wave of Russo-orientialism had thundered against the shores of Western Europe.

After the psuedo-Hindoo, *Le Dieu Bleu,* Cocteau left what must, to him, have been alien water and paddled in the complex whirlpool of *Parade,* thus starting an eddy which increased its circumference until the strolling-player circus-fair background has become almost synonymous with French ballet ever since. Though Margaret Crossland dismisses *Parade* as a flop, which of course it was at the time, the influence of this Satie-Picasso-Massine work has been so immense that today it has acquired an aura of triumphant success.

Ballet does not play an important part in this biography but the dance is never far away. Whether writing a book or poem, drawing a line, designing a ballet, directing a play or film, Cocteau works with the hand and mind of a choreographer.

Does then Margaret Crossland make this genius live in the pages of her book? Hardly, because nobody other than Cocteau himself could really do this and the most alive passages are the extracts from Cocteau's letters about the filming of *Orphée* and *Les Enfants Terribles.* But she has had a good try and one can only admire her courage for attempting, not unsuccessfully, to give the ignorant English some idea of the loves, lives and ambitions of one of the most remarkable characters of our time. **P.W.**

Vancouver To Mexico

Festival Ballet on the road at play and getting married on the Pacific Coast during the American tour. Dispatch with Photographs by LEON WARD.

In Stanley Park, Vancouver, three of the girls play Red Indians — Roma Duncan, Joyce Lyndon, Noel Rossana.

Right: Between Berkeley and Fresno the train was held up so that officials could check the damage done by the earth tremor. L to R: Andrée Millarie, Oleg Briansky, Toni Lander, Monica Leigh, Geoffrey Davidson, Hazel Coward and Judith Williams.

VANCOUVER, which now seems like years ago, was a delightful English type of town with nothing much to offer except fabulous scenery surrounding the city. The Vancouver Ballet Group threw a party for us and we had several of our own—four 21st birthday parties—Maralyn Burr, Ronald Emblen, Violette Verdy and Kenneth Sudell.

On to Portland and Spokane and we had a few mishaps in the company. Noel Rossana tore a ligament in her knee and Jon Waks twisted his ankle rather badly while ski-ing, and were unable to dance. By the time we arrived in San Francisco a week later, we were minus four dancers as Russell Kerr had torn a muscle in his back and Jeanette Minty was very ill. Fortunately not one was off for more than two weeks except for Noel Rossana, who had to return to London for special treatment.

San Francisco was voted our favourite city and we were rather sorry when we sailed under the Bay Bridge, the longest bridge in the world, for the last time. We strained our eyes to get a last glimpse of the Golden Gate Bridge across the bay.

In Berkeley most of us experienced our first earth tremor. I was awakened by the squeaking of the bed at 3.10 a.m. The bed bounced so much I thought I would hit the ceiling. But it was fun next day comparing our stories of the previous night, which kept our minds and tongues busy until we arrived in Fresno.

The first day in Los Angeles saw the wedding of Maralyn Burr and Louis Godfrey; in the evening, of Daphne Dale and Nicholas Polajenko. Both couples left next day to spend their honeymoon on one of the wonderful beaches on the Californian coast.

The company also had a week's holiday which we spent lazing on some of the finest beaches in the world. The time spent exploring Beverly Hills, Bel Air, the Hollywood studios and our own Christmas and New Year parties, our great success with press and public—these are only a few of the many things we will always remember about Los Angeles.

On New Year's Day we saw the famous Rose Parade in Pasadena, which is only a little way out of Los Angeles. The parade consisted of forty military and High School bands and about a hundred floats from all over the States. The floats were completely decorated with countless flowers peculiar to the particular state or district from which they came. Soon after the parade had begun a sudden downpour of rain sent most people scurrying for shelter. The rain continued and soon everyone in the parade was soaked to the skin—Beauty Queens looked like mermaids thrown from the Pacific, but they kept smiling and plodded on.

Arriving in San Diego, 200 miles south of Los Angeles, we entered what appeared to be an hotel from the outside but discovered just in time that it had been taken over as a billet by the U.S. Marines. I would hate to think what might have happened if we had enlisted, thinking all the time that we were signing for an hotel room!

So the tour goes on. In El Paso, Texas, we taxied over to the Mexican-Texas border, which was only a few hundred yards away, in a mad dash to get some souvenirs. We had only one hour to spare before catching our Pullman, which was due to leave at midnight. More souvenirs were collected in this hour than in the whole five months in the U.S.A. and Canada.

First Hollywood wedding—Louis Godfrey and Maralyn Burr. Mary Duchesne as bridesmaid on left, Julian Braunsweg, who gave the bride away, on right.

Second Hollywood wedding which occurred later in the day, December 20: Nicholas Polajenko and Daphne Dale. They are seen dancing together in Les Sylphides.

Mexican Hayride with Peter White, Tamara Toumanova and Oleg Briansky singing 'North of zee border' as the train left El Paso.

Nutcracker surprises

The first complete recording of Tchaikovsky's ballet reveals many new things about a score that is seldom heard in full.

AT last ballet enthusiasts can have a recording of a full-length classic that is everything it should be, with the release by the American Mercury Company of a complete performance of *The Nutcracker*.

Previous records—Decca's almost complete *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty*—were steps in the right direction, leaving out very little. The new *Nutcracker* is absolutely complete, and could well be taken as a precedent for the future presentation of these longer ballet scores on records—and in the theatre.

There are fine LP recordings of most of the better-known single-act ballets from the Diaghilev and current repertoires, but the position is much less satisfactory in the major classics. Record companies issue complete operas, on as many as 12 sides, but more often than not the ballet public is palmed off with snippets or drastically cut arrangements of scores which in some cases—those of Delibes, Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev, for example—are every bit as good as long works for which LP space is found, and sometimes a great deal better.

The Nutcracker (Tchaikovsky). Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Women's Chorus (Antal Dorati). Mercury OL-2-101. 2 12in. 89*s*. 6*d*.

TCHAIKOVSKY, in one of his letters, explains that he was not greatly attracted by the "bourgeois" German Christmas party background of *Casse-Noisette* and that he had accepted the commission with reluctance. Later, after a number of delays, as the work progressed, his imagination was fired and he enthusiastically completed the score.

The music not only bears this out—the opening children's party scene is the least distinguished—but leaves little doubt that inspiration came at a particular point in the story: not surprisingly, at the moment when an element of supernatural fantasy is first introduced, in the battle between toy soldiers and mice. For all the music's unevenness, and the difficulties connected with the ballet's successful staging, the score is, in the main, as captivating to the listener as it is rewarding to the dancer, and it is time that an attempt was made in this country (as Balanchine has recently done in America) to produce it worthily.

In this first complete recording, every note of the music is played and almost all repeats observed. The performance is as superb as all will expect who heard Dorati conduct for ballet during his long association with the De Basil company. Tchaikovsky's metronome and expression markings are faithfully followed throughout, the orchestra plays with polish and feeling; and the result is proof enough (if any were ever needed) that no monkeyings with speed, rubato and dynamics are needed to make Tchaikovsky ballet music "effective" away from the theatre. For most people there will be some pleasant surprises, even in such well-known numbers as the *Sugar Plum* variation.

During a short visit to Paris Tchaikovsky had written home to his publisher, "I have discovered a new instrument in Paris, something between a piano and a glockenspiel, with a divinely beautiful tone. I want to introduce this into the *Nutcracker* ballet. The instrument is called the 'Celesta Mustel,' and costs 1,200 francs. You can buy it from the inventor, Mustel, in Paris. . . . Have it sent direct to Petersburg; but no one there must know about it. I am afraid Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov might hear of it and make use of it before I could. I expect the instrument will make a tremendous sensation."

His introduction of the celesta into the orchestra in *The Nutcracker* (mainly in the Sugar Plum Fairy's variation) has never been surpassed for imaginative exploitation of the magical tone qualities of the instrument. But how many people know that the famous solo has an equally delightful little *presto* coda, always unaccountably suppressed in ballet performances, as it also is in Tchaikovsky's own concert suite arrangement? Hearing it played here in a performance that brings out all of its gossamer delicacy and lightness should surely persuade the artistic director of one of our companies to restore these irresistible 32 bars to their rightful place in one of the most celebrated dances in the classical repertoire.

Similarly, the eight bars always missed out of the *entrée* section of the same *pas de deux* will be heard on these records by most ballet-goers for the first time. And why on earth do both Festival Ballet and Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet leave out of their stagings of the Kingdom of Sweet *divertissement* the rollicking *Dance of the Clowns*, called in the score *La Mère Gigogne et les Polichinelles*?

The American recording, rich in bass and brilliant in the treble, is amazingly clear and gives a thrilling account of peak moments, with brass and cymbals in particular coming through with exciting realism, while the actual rifle shot which opens the battle between Mouse King and Nutcracker in the second scene is quite alarmingly reproduced. The off-stage chorus in the *Snowflakes Waltz* is heard in exactly the right perspective. The discs come in a luxurious and well-designed album. This includes reproductions of photographs of the original St. Petersburg, and more recent productions (much too small considering the size of the pages). It adds nearly 17 shillings to the usual cost of two LPs, but is well worth it. Taken all round the issue can be unreservedly recommended as an essential addition to any serious ballet music collection.

NEW RECORDS

Reviewed by **DAVID HUNT**

Shakespeare and Tchaikovsky

Hamlet Overture (Tchaikovsky). *Romeo and Juliet* Fantasy Overture (Tchaikovsky). Philharmonia Orchestra (Anatole Fistoulari). Parlophone PMC1014. 1 12in. 32*s*. 4½*d*. *Romeo and Juliet* Fantasy Overture (Tchaikovsky). *Prince Igor*—Polovtsian Dances (Borodine orch. Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov). *A Night on Bare Mountain* (Moussorgsky orch. Rimsky-Korsakov). Orchestra and Chorus of Radiodiffusion Française (Igor Markevitch). Columbia 33CX1208. 1 12in. 36*s*. 5½*d*.

OF the four works given on these discs, only the Polovtsian Dances from *Prince Igor* (which the Zagreb Opera Company have recently shown us in their rightful operatic context for the first time since before the war) were written as ballet music. The others have all been choreographed at various times: *A Night on Bare Mountain* by Nijinska for Diaghilev in 1924; the *Hamlet* Overture (part of incidental music written by Tchaikovsky for a St.

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Petersburg production of the play with Sacha Guitry's father, Lucien Guitry in the title role) came as a gift from the gods to Helpmann when he first heard it during a search for the right music for his ballet of the same name; and practically everyone has done a ballet at one time or another to the *Romeo and Juliet* Overture.

On these discs *Romeo and Juliet* takes up a whole side on each. The Philharmonia's is unquestionably the more polished performance and whereas Fistoulari's is a satisfying interpretation along orthodox lines, Markevitch is a shade more dramatic, but somewhat individualistic in the matter of tempi and phrasing as is also the case in his conducting of the Moussorgsky, taken much too hurriedly to give anyone the creeps.

The *Prince Igor* dances are given as rousing a performance as could be wished for with the necessary qualities of barbaric colour and atmosphere coming excitingly across. Fistoulari's musicianly treatment of *Hamlet* moulds it with grandeur and nobility far removed from the more usual overmelodramatic approach of most conductors. Both discs are well engineered.

Daybreak in the home

Daphnis and Chloë Suites 1 and 2 (Ravel). Hague Philharmonic Orchestra, Netherlands Chamber Choir (Willem van Otterloo). Philips ABR4019. 1 10in. 27*s.* 3½*d.*

THIS excellent little disc gives what is unquestionably the cream of Ravel's lovely *Daphnis and Chloë score*. There is much to be said for the theory that this is one of the cases (like Stravinsky's *Sacre*) where the music is so obviously a masterpiece in its own right and has so little need of scenic illustration that choreography, no matter how fine, detracts from rather than enhances appreciation and enjoyment. Diaghilev apparently believed this, when after commissioning the score he praised its quality but hesitated to produce it as a ballet.

One thing is certain: heard in the quiet of one's home the most magical section of all, *Daybreak*, can be savoured without any of the irritation caused by the fidgetings and chatterings that have to be endured at Covent Garden where this serves as change-of-scenery music between the second and third scenes.

The Dutch performance is beautifully sensitive and fully captures the writing's shimmering, impressionist light-haze effect. Van Otterloo's grasp of the underlying rhythmic impulses provides, in the two big ensemble dances, exciting finales to both suites. The recording is rich and firm and has completely silent surfaces. My only criticism is that the choir is slightly too forward to achieve the required "spirit voices" effect so wonderfully achieved in Ansermet's complete recording on LXT2775.

Bartók composed for ballet

The Miraculous Mandarin—Suite (Bartók). Chicago Symphony Orchestra (Antal Dorati). One side of Mercury MG50038. 1 12in. 36*s.* 5¼*d.*

ALTHOUGH several ballets have been arranged to Béla Bartók music (notably, in this country, Gore's *Concerto Burlesco*), only the comparatively early *Wooden Prince* and *The Miraculous Mandarin* were actually written for ballet. *The Miraculous Mandarin*, a ballet pantomime in one act, was composed between 1918 and 1919 in Budapest. Because of its grotesque and lurid scenario, one of the most unsuitable ever conceived for the stage, the work was officially banned for many years—a production in Cologne in 1925 was withdrawn on censor's orders after one performance, another in Budapest seven years later was cancelled after the dress rehearsal—and the ballet's real première could be said to have been the 1951 staging by the New York City Ballet with Todd Bolender choreography.

The story, set in a brothel room, concerns a prostitute and her accomplices who rob and murder one of their victims, a macabre Chinese mandarin. Bolender apparently toned down the seamier, more perverse aspects by adding touches of obscure symbolism; but apart from praise for its powerful score the ballet seems to have had limited appeal.

One of Bartók's most strikingly imaginative and colourful works, the music makes a compelling, almost brutal assault on the senses. It is an elaborately scored and brilliantly complex piece which owes a great deal to Stravinsky's rhythmic innovations. The performance under Dorati of the composer's own abridged concert suite arrangement is exciting and masterly and takes up the whole of one disc side. The reverse offers an equally well-played account of the *Peacock Variations* by Bartók's Hungarian compatriot and friend, Zoltán Kodály, the two works making an intelligently chosen and interestingly contrasted coupling. The recording is outstandingly vivid and gives excellent definition between the instruments.

Martha's Spring

Copland: *Appalachian Spring. Fanfare for the Common Man. Billy the Kid. El Salon Mexico.* National Symphony Orchestra of Washington (Howard Mitchell) Nixa WLP5286. 1 12 in. 36*s.* 5½*d.*

AARON COPLAND's *Appalachian Spring*, subtitled "Ballet for Martha", needs no introduction to readers. This first recording to be issued in this country is of the later scoring for large orchestra—the original version for 13 instruments is played only for Martha Graham's ballet. While not equalling the virtuosity of the group of players who gave such wonderful performances of the music at the Saville Theatre last March, the Washington orchestra gives an enjoyable account of it, the endearing, full-hearted tenderness of Copland's vision of the true America being well conveyed. The composer's detailed synopsis printed on the record sleeve will enhance understanding and appreciation of the ballet when the opportunity comes for seeing it again.

The suite from the music for Loring's *Billy the Kid* is an abridged version of that given on CTL7040 played by Ballet Theatre Orchestra and coupled with William Schuman's *Undertow*. Important omissions are the first section of *Street Scene* (No. 2) and *Billy Dreams of his Mexican Sweetheart* (No. 8)—the *pas-de-deux* that immediately precedes the final stalking and shooting of Billy. The performance is again highly creditable; but for those specifically interested in *Billy the Kid* the more complete Capitol version is the obvious choice.

Appalachian Spring takes almost the whole of one side, the last three minutes of which are devoted to a performance of Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*, an interesting minor essay for brass and percussion. *Billy* shares the reverse with a breezy account of *El Salon Mexico*, written in 1936 and still the work by which Copland is best known outside America. Rex Reid's *Les Belles Créoles*, for the Australian National Ballet, was one of a number of ballets which were danced to it.

The recording is quite vivid on both sides, if a little dry.

Naïla Waltz (Delibes). Philharmonia Orchestra (Nicolai Malko). One side of HMV 7P152. 1 45, 6*s.* 4*d.*

WHEN Adam's *Le Corsaire* was revived at the Paris Opéra in 1867, his pupil Delibes was commisioned to write the music for a new waltz divertissement called *Le Pas des Fleurs*. The melody, its lilting chromaticisms enhanced by delicate orchestral colour, has retained its charm over the years and is given here with the utmost sensitivity.

The coupling is an orchestral version of Gounod's *Judex*, a somewhat sanctimonious chorus from the oratorio *Mors et Vita*.

Dance and Dancers . . . AT HOME

SADLER'S WELLS AT COVENT GARDEN

Sylphs should not pad

FOKINE's *Les Sylphides* is a ballet that has done good service in the repertory. Perhaps too good, as long acquaintanceship has taken the edge off novelty and possibly dulled our appetite for the work's subtle flavour. One wonders whether the dancers appreciate its evocation of romanticism. Certainly that appreciation, if present, is nowadays heavily veiled.

Not that the recent performance with Anne Heaton, Alexis Rassine, Rosemary Lindsay and Elaine Fifield, was anything less than routinely competent, but to be no more is to give this modern masterpiece less than is its due. The Sadler's Wells Ballet has too many works in its repertory which are given "second feature" performances that do little more than pad out the evening. When such ballets as *Les Sylphides* and Balanchine's *Ballet Imperial* are in question it seems a pity that the company cannot restore to them the lustre they once possessed.

Still in carping mood, had it not been for the assurance of the printed programme I would never have believed that the orchestra accompanying *Sylphides* was the same as I heard in *Tristan* under Kempe a few days earlier. Arrangements should speedily be made for the orchestra to accompany ballet with the same sensitivity as they bring to certain, though by no means all, opera performances.

New to homage

ASHTON's *Homage to the Queen* started life as a *pièce d'occasion*. The occasion has long passed but the piece is still going strong, triumphantly surviving changes in its original cast and holding its place in the general repertory. Of its ten principal roles only one remains inviolate, Alexander Grant's Promethean Spirit of Fire.

The ballet's most recent performance revealed three major cast-changes new to myself. Anya Linden, who already has a success as Queen of the Earth to her credit, follows far in the wake of Elvin and Beriosova as Queen of the Waters. The aqueous regality demanded by the role appeared to escape the young dancer, and her especial quality of exuberant attack was misplaced when applied to the languid grace of Ashton's choreography.

Another newcomer in the Water episode, although he originally danced the part last season, was Michael Boulton in the role of the Spirit of Water created by Brian Shaw. Boulton was also something of a disappointment. His gifts are not those of Shaw whose *ballon* and musical sensibility this difficult solo was composed to exploit. Shaw made his effect by appearing to identify himself with Malcolm Arnold's music, an identification which Boulton was not able to establish.

The ending of the Water Spirit's variation had been slightly adapted for Boulton, and various other choreographic amendments appear to have been made in the ballet, most particularly in the solo for the Fire Cavalier, which was danced at this performance for the first time by Philip Chatfield. Chatfield gave a brave account of himself in one of the least interesting roles in the ballet; he appears to have at least partially recovered from the bad patch through which he was struggling last season.

The ballet as a whole wears well and in the conciseness of its statement of the aims of classical ballet it has an essential place in the English repertory. In many ways this is Ashton's finest purely choreographic achievement to date but, like *Scènes de Ballet* before it, it calls for better dancing from the *corps de ballet* than it customarily receives. But all quibbles fade in the face of Fonteyn and Somes in the culminating *pas de deux*.

There is much in this dance that could easily seem wilfully bizarre—the curious backhanded lift used at one point by Somes to carry his Queen across the stage, and the wrestler's grapple by which Fonteyn is slung across her partner's shoulders are only two instances—but danced as it is by these two artists its eccentricities are transfigured into a rare *pas de deux* rich in poetic invention.

C.A.B.

When Grey is black

BERYL GREY's repertoire of contemporary roles is painfully small, therefore her return to de Valois' *Checkmate* on January 20, was all the more welcome.

This ballet should be retained in the repertoires of the world on account of the fact that it epitomises the 'thirties—designing, choreography, music and general approach are so typical of that restless period.

Gilbert Vernon as Franz and Annette Page as Swanilda in the last act pas de deux *from the Theatre Ballet's* Coppelia. *Page moves to Covent Garden next season.* *Photo: Denis de Marney*

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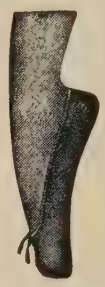

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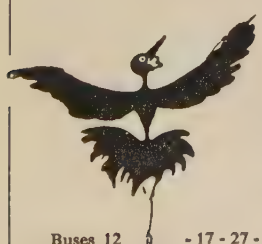

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Grey is a girl who naturally exudes goodness on the stage, she is a thoroughly nice girl in the best sense of the word. It comes, therefore, as more of a shock when she so successfully becomes the essence of evil and cruelty. Her Black Queen, with her treacherous nature, is a remarkably unpleasant lady. Gone is any vestige of the lyricism for which Grey is famous. Here is a performance of scissor-like precision and great force, a quite spine-chilling interpretation.

The Red Knight of Chatfield was not so good as it can be and his variation fell rather flat. With the composer, Arthur Bliss, on the rostrum the score became noisy and powerful if sometimes rough in certain passages.

Performance in miniature

MAKING her debut in a full-length role on the Covent Garden stage, Elaine Fifield danced Swanilda in *Coppelia* on January 22, matinee. She was supported by Brian Shaw as Franz and Franklin White as Dr. Coppelius.

In spite of a commendable performance, Fifield has not yet got the measure of the larger stage. It was all in miniature as seen through the wrong end of a telescope. In the first act it was not easy to separate her from her surroundings; in the second act she improved, in the last act she was good. She played as if she were still in Rosebury Avenue. No doubt when she has got used to the larger theatre and has overcome her natural initial nervousness she will make a fine Swanilda. The role was well-conceived and finely polished.

Shaw appears to be finding the road from his recent operation rather hard and stony. He made a good shot at Franz but there is again a certain untidy roughness about his work which in the past year or so he had admirably succeeded in burnishing away. With encouragement he should soon be back at the top of his form.

Franklin White's Coppelius was most uneven. All the more surprising because in the past he has developed a convincing and rather personal characterisation. The best dancing came, as usual, from Anya Linden as Aurora who seems also to be developing a greater musical sense. **P.W.**

New conductor in the lake

IT is an important and novel feature of the current Covent Garden season that a number of guest conductors, Anatole Fistoulari, Sir Adrian Boult, Malcolm Arnold and the Master of the Queen's Musick, Sir Arthur Bliss, have been engaged to direct ballet performances.

It would be pleasant to record that the welcome debut, made with the full-length *Le Lac des Cygnes* on January 28, of the Anglo-Russian conductor Fistoulari, who has considerable experience of conducting for ballet, was an unqualified triumph; unfortunately it was not.

Some passages in the score (the Waltz for the *Pas de Six* and the entire last Act proved good examples) came over with a new grandeur and breadth, with the orchestra fairly singing out the depths of Tchaikovsky's sad Russian soul. Elsewhere, although Fistoulari obtained above-average playing from the orchestra throughout, the music was not always well co-ordinated with the dancers. The *pas de trois*, for example, customarily taken at a galloping pace at Covent Garden, was so slowed up that its interpreters seemed at a loss to fill out the music. Presumably such miscalculations will soon be rectified, in which case Fistoulari should have a lot to offer our ballet.

The Odette-Odile, Violetta Elvin, was suffering from the double disadvantage, a new conductor and an unfamiliar partner, for Michael Somes was substituting for her usual partner, John Field, who was sick. Elvin's performance, like Grey's, bears every hall-mark of the ballerina, but was not, however, on this occasion completely consistent. The Act 2 variation she danced with an individual charm and power, and throughout her Odette appeared to be deeply felt.

Her Odile is rather less satisfactory, too much emphasis being placed on the mere accomplishment of the steps, which did not flow into an integrated whole. Strangely enough, with all her exceptional qualities, she seemed to approach the choreography with an unjustified air of tentativeness that prevented her dancing from making its fullest effect. **C.A.B.**

Elvin returns to Giselle

ON February 4, Violetta Elvin danced her first Giselle of the present Sadler's Wells season. Alexis Rassine partnered her with a stability and security that belied his slightness of build and she was well set off by a *corps de ballet* that showed some of the drilled discipline we read so much about but rarely see nowadays.

The restraint and humility of Elvin's interpretation may perhaps leave the general theatre-goer and dilettante unmoved, for there are no "expressive" grimaces, no personal overlayings of any kind to interfere with her lyrical flow of movement. It is true that where histrionics are called for—in the mad scene—her grief is too personal to project sufficiently. She might well consider that when Giselle loses her reason she also loses her inhibitions, if for no other reason than that the pathos which has been accumulating throughout the act might blossom into melodrama.

But if Elvin's mime does not bring the average member of the audience out in goose-pimples of compassion, the beautifully schooled quality of her movement (reminiscent at times of the young Toumanova) is, for the lover of classical dancing, something to be savoured, and sets a standard of perfection of its own.

In both acts, the absolute musicality of her phrasing, the generously extended and sublimely expressive line, the impeccably clean attack and an integrity that gives full lyrical value to every *enchainement* with nothing skimped, nothing faked —all these add up, for those with eyes to see, to a memorable reminder that dance is the principal ingredient of ballet. **D.H.**

The Ballet Rambert Les Sylphides *which is the best production of Fokine's romantic ballet in British repertoires. Beryl Goldwyn is seen with Alexander Bennett.*
Photo: Jas O'Callaghan

In brief

ASHTON's one act ballet based on a novel by Pierre Loti, *Madame Chrysanthème*, with music by Alan Rawsthorne and designs by Isabel Lambert, will have its first performance at Covent Garden on March 29. Elaine Fifield will create the principal role.

CRANKO's *The Lady and the Fool* will be withdrawn from the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet repertoire and re-mounted for the Sadler's Wells Ballet with Beryl Grey in the role of La Capricciosa. *Les Patineurs* is to go to the younger company in its place.

ANTON DOLIN will give his farewell performance of Satan in de Valois' *Job* at Covent Garden during the summer. He and Markova will also appear as guest stars in some performances of *Giselle*.

TELEVISION

THE CHRISTMAS STOCKING

Given on December 19. Choreography, Margaret Dale. Music, Bizet; orchestra conducted by Eric Robinson. Designs, Michael Yates. Produced by Naomi Capon.

CAST

The Toys.

MAUREEN BRUCE ANNETTE CHAPPELL
BRIAN SHAW PIRMIN TRECU
WALTER TREVOR

Corps de Ballet

Betty Ash Diana Field Diana Payne Mavis Traill.

NAOMI CAPON and Margaret Dale are old hands now at providing children's entertainment, in fact some months ago Trojan the Horse almost vied in popularity with Muffin the Mule.

Christmas Stocking was Dale's best ballet to date. In the past 18 months her choreographic talent has developed considerably. Though this ballet was devised first and foremost for children it was of a very high standard and contained some excellent choreography.

The plot concerned two children who live in an enchanted house. They wake up on Christmas Eve and tip-toe downstairs to discover whether their stockings really have been filled with magical toys. As they take each toy from their stocking it performs before them.

First the boy extracts some miniature musical instruments, then the girl draws out a china doll, then in succession a ball, a spinning top and a windmill, all of which are represented by short dances.

A most effective touch, though not strikingly original, was the way in which the pieces of shimmering glass in the chandelier, hanging in the centre of the room, resolved themselves into a rose-shaped group of dancers, who gave a very pleasing *pas de quartre*.

Pirmin Trecu executed most proficiently a great number of turns as the spinning top and Annette Chappell was a vivacious doll. But the limelight of the ballet was stolen by Maureen Bruce and Pirmin Trecu in the *pas de deux* representing a model windmill, with outspread arms resembling the slow, stately turning sails; it provided a decorative spectacle and contained the most original choreography.

The only flaw in the whole programme was the performance of the two children, who at the start very nearly destroyed the whole atmosphere of the ballet. They were completely expressionless, never looking in the least bit excited at what they pulled out of their stockings. The performance of a child is almost always a reflection of the handling of the producer. In this case, the disappointing results were the more surprising since the production was by Naomi Capon.

Michael Yates designed a lordly mansion with a large staircase leading into an ornate hall. The music, taken from Bizet's *Jeux D'Enfants*, was ideal, especially the little haunting refrain which introduced each dance.

PUNCH AND THE CHILD

Steps into Ballet—Part III

Given on December 13. Choreography, Kenneth Macmillan. Designs, Michael Yates. Introduced by Peggy van Praagh. Music, Richard Arnell—on gramophone records, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Piano played by John Lanchberry. Produced by Naomi Capon.

CAST

Punch — — — — — — DONALD BRITTON
Child — — — — — — SUSAN SALOMAN
Mother — — — — — — MAUREEN BRUCE
Father — — — — — — DONALD BRITTON
Judy — — — — — — MAUREEN BRUCE
Policeman — — — — KENNETH MACMILLAN
Pretty Polly — — — — MAUREEN BRUCE

IN these three short children's programmes, the production element has attempted to give young students some idea of the work which is necessary to become a dancer. They have shown the development from the simplest steps practised at the *barre*, to those used to form an actual ballet. These programmes, in the space of time available, could have been no simple undertaking, so it is even more satisfying to record the success that they have undoubtedly achieved.

In her final talk, Peggy van Praagh discoursed on the importance of the leg and arm movements of a dancer, of the exercises for each, and of those which combine the two. This was concluded with demonstrations of various kinds of *arabesques*, with examples taken from *Giselle*, *Carnaval*, and *Pineapple Poll*, to emphasise the various points.

Prior to the final instalment of Kenneth Macmillan's ballet there was another short talk on make-up, which in this case was devoted to hair-styles.

Fortunately it lasted only a few minutes as it was the only fatuous element in the whole series. No child could have been even vaguely impressed by a mantilla being thrust onto the head of a rather embarrassed-looking Maureen Bruce.

THE ballet reopened with the Child watching Punch doing a most intriguing dance on a hobby-horse, as he had apparently succeeded in evading arrest. However all pleasant dreams must come to an end, for Mother and Father reappeared to recapture their daughter, who was left with only memories of her exciting experiences.

In the choreography of the ballet (in which I suspect out of necessity the music of Richard Arnell had had to be cut) Kenneth Macmillan cleverly contrived to use with great advantage the simple steps which Peggy van Praagh demonstrated in her talks. It was a pity though, that the ballet could not have been given a complete run-through at the end, apparently this was mainly due to the various difficulties which arise from using recorded music.

The beach settings of Michael Yates were well designed although the backcloth bore rather a foreboding appearance as if a typical English sea-side storm was liable to blow up at any moment. Perhaps this was intentional.

The highlights of the series were Donald Britton's performance as Punch, grotesque but always remaining a figure of comedy ; an enchanting portrayal of Judy by Maureen Bruce ; Peggy van Praagh's talks, authoritative yet always charming ; the versatility for one so young as Susan Saloman ; the choreography of Kenneth Macmillan ; and the general handling of the whole production by Naomi Capon. **Nicholas Baker**

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Alicia Markova returns

ALICIA MARKOVA returned to New York City on February 14, after a holiday in the Bahamas, to start rehearsals for her February 24 debut in *Orfeo ed Euridice* at the Metropolitan Opera House. After this will come her major season with Ballet Theatre at the Met in April. Coincident with this latter engagement will be the special exhibition of photographs and memorabilia pertaining to her distinguished career which will be on view throughout the month at the Dance Alcove of the 58th Street Music Library.

New York City Ballet Season

THE New York City Ballet opened its four week winter season at the N.Y. City Center on February 15th. During this engagement, two new Balanchine ballets were premièred: *Roma*, with music by Bizet and décor and costumes by Eugene Berman and *Pas De Trois* (II) to music by Glinka. After this season, Janet Reed takes an indefinite leave of absence and Melissa Hayden returns after a long absence.

The company departs in the late March to start its European tour on April 3. Maria Tallchief, currently on tour with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, will rejoin the New York City Ballet in late April, appearing with them for the balance of their European tour.

Kirstein quits City Center post

LINCOLN KIRSTEIN has resigned his post as managing director of the New York City Center of Music and Drama. The basic issue that caused this policy fight was the direction being taken by both the operatic and dramatic branches. In protesting against the policies and repertories of these divisions, Kirstein declared, "That policy is correct if one sees the City Center as a money-making concern. I see the City Center as a money-spending concern. If we had the highest artistic principles, we would get the money." The essential issue, however, is whether the managing director is to have a title without authority or a title with the means to back it. In the meantime, Kirstein continues in his post as general director of the New York City Ballet.

Graham's Appearances

RETURNING to New York in early February from Dallas, Texas, where she made a highly successful guest appearance with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Martha Graham performed for the first time in New York since her return from Europe. This event, a joint lecture-demonstration in conjunction with critic Walter Terry, was viewed by a capacity audience at the YMHA Auditorium.

Escudero's return

VINCENTE ESCUDERO, the famous gypsy dancer, opened a two-week "farewell" engagement in New York on February 7, too late for review in this issue. This American tour, which is being booked by Charles E. Green, returns Escudero to the United States after a 20-year absence and includes dancer Carmita Garcia and flamenco singer Pepe el la Matrone.

Impresario Charles E. Green also has an impressive dance schedule planned for next season. These include a tour for Pilar Lopez and her dance group of 25 which will open in September. Mr. Green is also negotiating a five-month tour for the National Yugoslav Ballet, starting in January 1956.

Sol Hurok's Plans

SOL HUROK, who is bringing the Sadler's Wells Ballet back to America in the autumn, announces that this company will play a five-week engagement at the Met before taking off on its cross-country tour. Other dance attractions under Hurok's management will be Ballet Theatre, Alexandra Danilova and Company, the Azuma Kabuki Dancers and The Scots Guards.

He has also been named as television consultant to the National Broadcasting Company. In this capacity he will line up imported and domestic talent for the network's major productions such as the once-monthly *Producer's Showcase*.

Festival Ballet

WITH no major Manhattan theatre available, the Festival Ballet's New York appearances have been scaled down to but three performances which took place at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on February 18 and 19. The repertory for this engagement consisted of *Esmeralda* (Act 2), *Scheherazade*, *Symphony For Fun*; *Sylphides*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Prince Igor*, *Napoli*, *Swan Lake* and *Petrouchka*.

Dance at Juilliard

A MID-APRIL dance festival is planned by the Dance Department of the Juilliard School of Music. This series of four to six performances, utilising the Juilliard Orchestra as well, will, in part, consist of a young professional group of students. Highlights of the programmes will be appearances by Jose Limon, who is also a member of the faculty, and at least two works by Doris Humphrey. One will be a new one, composed to music by Frank Martin while the other will be a revival of her noted *Life of the Bee*. It is also possible that dancer-choreographer Anna Sokolow may mount a new work for the young Juilliard company.

National Ballet of Canada in America

THE National Ballet of Canada, under the direction of Celia Franca, will make its first appearances in the New York area on March 25 and 26 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. It is more than likely that their schedule will contain a new ballet by Antony Tudor, *Offenbach In The Underworld*, as well as his *Lilac Garden* and *Gala Performance*. In addition, there may be full-length productions of *Giselle* and *Swan Lake* as well as other shorter works.

Dance on Broadway

DANCE plays a paramount role in two major musical productions recently opened on Broadway. One of these, *Plain and Fancy*, a musical dealing with a present-day Amish community in Pennsylvania, has dances by Helen Tamiris. This Pennsylvania Dutch religious sect, with its simple life and charming costume habits, has provided Tamiris with some wonderful choreographic opportunities and she used them in brilliant fashion, particularly in *By Lantern Light*, a courting dance with a superb central performance by Daniel Nagrin. Nagrin, who is concert dancer of major note, also is outstanding in the carnival ballet, *On The Midway*. Elsewhere there is a lot of fresh and disarming folk dance material illustrative of the community life of these farm folk.

COMPLETELY different in every way is *House of Flowers*, the musical with a West Indies setting that has been directed by Peter Brook, pictorially the sets and costumes by Oliver Messel are like a lovely dream, full of rare imagination, wit and art. Its plot, concerning the rivalry between two bordellos provides an idea that soon becomes repetitious. However, Herbert Ross, who succeeded George Balanchine as choreographer during the out-of-town engagements, has composed some interesting dance passages. Especially noteworthy are a couple of street processions of natives that have humour, abandon and a delightful air of improvisation. Geoffrey Holder, the noted Trinidadian dancer, makes his Broadway debut in this production that also includes some members of his concert company. Appearing fully six feet and a half in height, Holder has the curious, loping style of dance made memorable by the Watusi tribe in the films *Savage Splendour* and *King Soloman's Mines*. Also adding considerably to the excitement of the dances were the percussion group and the steel band trio.

In brief

WITHIN the period of one week, Agna Enters presented a solo performance at the Phoenix Theatre, presided at the opening of an exhibition of her recent paintings at the Newhouse Galleries, this date coinciding with the publication day of her first novel, *Among The Daughters*, dealing with the life of a dancer.

PEARL PRIMUS, who gave birth to a son during late January (she is Mrs. Yale Woll in private life), has been signed for a concert tour next autumn under the direction of Kenneth Allen Associates. She will be supported by a new company consisting of five dancers, three drummers, a singer and a pianist.

THE Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo recently completed the first half of this season's tour with box office receipts of close to half a million dollars. The remainder of the season is expected to exceed this figure. For the first time, interestingly enough, the troupe of 78 people is being transported across the country by a convoy consisting of two cars and three trucks.

Arthur Todd

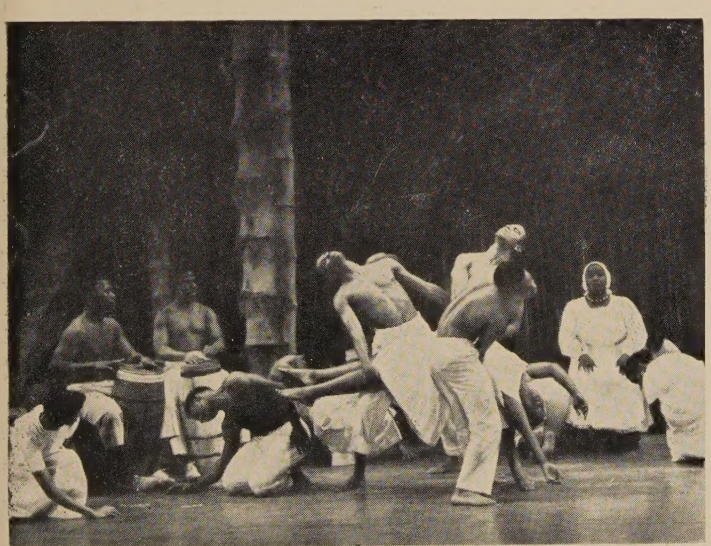
FRANCE

The Paris Opéra

THERE has been little choreographic activity in the first month of 1955. It is true, however, that as usual plans are manifest and some of these are already in process of realisation. At the Opéra *Les Noces Fantastiques* calls on all the resources of the ballet company; in addition to the principal soloists, Nina Vyroubova, Claude Bessy and Peter Van Dijk, a very important part will be played by the *Grands sujets* who, in the sailors' variations, will bring into play many athletic qualities.

After this creation, which is definitely fixed for February 9, Serge Lifar will undertake *Roméo et Juliette*, to the music of Prokofiev, which he plans to present during the Paris season.

Before this, John Cranko will doubtless have



Two scenes from House of Flowers, *on Broadway. Dances with Geoffrey Holder and his group.* *Photos: Arthur*

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arranged *La Belle Hélène*, in which Yvette Chauviré, as Offenbach's heroine, will have a rôle very different to those she is accustomed to playing, such as Giselle, the Shadow in *Les Mirages*, and the Nereid in *Nautéos*.

Following the departure of Liane Daydé on a three-month tour of the United States, Josette Clavier took her place in *Variations*, while Lycette Darsonval was replaced on January 26, by Claude Bessy, who also distinguished herself in the rôle of Love in *Les Mirages*. With her customary mastery Madeleine Lafon has appeared as Swanilda in *Coppélia*; in the rôle of Frantz, Geneviève Guillot has not been able to equal the spirited charm of Paulette Dynalix.

A sprain, suffered during a performance of *Grand Pas*, has unfortunately resulted in Youly Algaroff being absent from the stage for some time. Peter Van Dijk has had to replace him in *Les Indes Galantes* and also at Monte Carlo, where he was invited with Yvette Chauviré as guest artist with the Amsterdam ballet under the direction of Françoise Adret. He appeared there in *Rondo Capriccioso* and extracts from *Suite en Blanc*.

The annual examinations take place at the Opéra on Friday, February 18.

At the Institut Chorégraphique, on January 20, Roland Manuel gave an important lecture on the origins of ballet in France and in particular on the works earlier than the *Ballet Comique de la Reine*. On February 4, Marcel Delannoy, Serge Lifar, and André Chastel will give a joint lecture on *Les Noces Fantastiques*, describing its origin and production.

An exhibition devoted to Carlotta Zambelli, who for more than fifty years has played an important rôle in the life of the dance at the Opéra, both on the stage and later in the ballet school, is planned to be held at the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra.

Folk Dances of Rumania

THE Bucharest House of Culture, founded in 1946, has just presented at the Théâtre de l'Empire, from January 11 - 30, a programme which is full of freshness and vitality. A total of 115 players made the visit, consisting of an important group of dancers, some singers and a typical orchestra, carefully chosen from all the local Rumanian dance formations.

Thanks to a rigorous discipline, these varied elements are combined in a charming ensemble. And in the strange country in which Latin and Slav influences exist cheek by jowl, free rein is given to the joyous verve and genial spontaneity, tempered at times by a melancholy languor, which seem to be the characteristics of its people.

The originality of the music is very marked. It consists first of all in the use of instruments generally unknown in the present day—the celebrated Pipes of Pan of Greek antiquity and the cimbalom of oriental origin which in sound is a little reminiscent of the gamelan of the Balinese. It is original too in the flexibility and variety of the "embroidery" with which they surround the least melodic theme. The violinists for their part have a gypsy-like virtuosity, and the naïve popular songs make free use of onomatopeia.

But it is the dance which fascinates most, and above all the *ensemble* dances. As in most folk dances, masculine technique, which makes great use of the leap, is more interesting than the feminine technique which is essentially *terre à terre*. Neither seems to have any unusual originality: in this respect it is interesting to note how folklore, with some variations or exceptions, is basically international, and above all conditioned by human possibilities. The excellent staging, for which credit is due to the ballet-master Petre Bodetz, is made all the more effective by rigid discipline.

The innumerable costumes, in which the famous multicoloured embroidery on white cloth predominates, alternate between the *fustanelles*, the wide trousers of Transsylvania, full skirts, and waistclothes striped according to the various provinces. Half mimed character scenes, *pas de deux* with bells, stick dances, Moldavian ballets and ballets of the Houtzouls follow one another with a lively rhythm the furious vivacity of which might have its sources in the Neapolitan tarantella and the frenzy of the Cossacks.

To end the programme, a vast picture book unfolds its pages before the spectator, revealing in turn, like a *tableau vivant* which comes to life, then discreetly becomes still again, the Dance of the Oovas, the Berbuncul, the Dance of Banat, the Briul, and the very graceful Game of Young Girls. A dazzling demonstration which brings precision, vivacity, rustic playfulness, and exoticism of music and costume to the down-to-earth simplicity of these whirling rounds.

In praise which must be given collectively we should not omit to mention the astonishing cimbalom player Dumitru Marinescu, and the player of the Pipes of Pan, Ion Opréa.

In brief

BEGUN under the sign of folklore, 1955 promises to reveal to Paris, in a vast panorama, many of the dances of Central and Eastern Europe. On the departure of the Rumanians, 145 artists of the Ballets Hongrois will be seen at the Empire. Later, from May 1 to 13, the Greek National Ballet will appear at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, and the Yugoslav National Ballet from Zagreb are also expected.

FROM May 19 to early July, the artistic group known as ANTA, presided over by Robert W. Dowling, will present a series of programmes entitled *Salute to France*. These will include the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, *Oklahoma!*, and finally, at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, a week's season by the New York City Ballet which had not been seen in Paris since 1952.

Maria-Françoise Christout

STEPS OF THE DANCE

(continued from page 20)

frequently merges into another step in *enchaînement*, but the most effective way of stopping the *pirouette*, is with a firm *plié* on supporting leg, and an extra lifting of the raised leg.

Simple pirouette piqué en dehors may be taken from 4th position *croisé* or *éffacé*. The principle is the same. The weight of the body is over the forward leg which is *en plié*. Rear leg held straight. Forward arm in 2nd position, other arm in 4th position. With simultaneous co-ordination the 4th position arm is brought in to 2nd position, as rear leg (held straight) steps *piqué* into 5th position front (*sur la demie-pointe*, or *pointe*). The rear leg actually takes the place of the forward leg, (towards which the body turns) the forward leg being picked up *sur le cou de pied* in front. To accomplish effectively, the leg which makes the *piqué* must be lifted slightly (shortened) into the hip socket. During the turn the arms are lowered smoothly to 1st position. When the *pirouette* is taken from *éffacé*, the head spots to the corner; when taken from *croisé* it spots front. The *pirouette* finishes with the working leg closing in 5th position or 4th position behind, or on one leg, *en plié*.

Ballet Dates

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET
at Covent Garden

February
24 *Sylphides, Boutique Fantasque, Firebird*
25 *Coppelia* (Beriosova, Chatfield)
26(M) *Sylphides, Firebird, Ballet Imperial*
28 *Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Somes)
March
1 *Variations on a Theme of Purcell, Balabile, Rinaldo and Armida, Façade*
2 *Variations on a Theme of Purcell, Balabile, Rinaldo and Armida, Façade*
3 *Lac des Cygnes* (Grey, Field)
4 *Balabile, Giselle* (Fonteyn, Somes)
5(M) *Variations on a Theme of Purcell, Lac des Cygnes* (Act II), *Boutique Fantasque*
5(E) *Giselle* (Elvin, Field), *Façade*
7 *Coppelia* (Lindsay, Doyle)
8 *Coppelia* (Nerina, Blair)
9 *Variations on a Theme of Purcell, Giselle* (*Clayden, Rassine*)
10 *The Shadow, Checkmate, Boutique Fantasque*
11 *Lac des Cygnes* (Elvin, Field)
12(M) *Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Field)
12(E) *Patineurs, Checkmate, Boutique Fantasque*
14 *Lac des Cygnes* (Nerina, Rassine)
15 *Balabile, Rinaldo and Armida, Boutique Fantasque*
16 *The Shadow, The Firebird, Boutique Fantasque*
17 *The Shadow, The Firebird, Boutique Fantasque*
18 *Patineurs, Rinaldo and Armida, Checkmate*
19(M) *Coppelia* (Heaton, Blair)
19(E) *Variations on a Theme of Purcell, The Shadow, Symphonic Variations, Façade*
21 *Variations on a Theme of Purcell, Balabile, Symphonic Variations, Façade*
22 Gala performance in the presence of the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret in aid of the Sadler's Wells Benevolent Fund and the Sadler's Wells School: *Variations on a Theme of Purcell, The Sleeping Beauty Act I, Lac des Cygnes* (Act II *pas de deux* and variations), *Façade, The Firebird*
23 *Sylphides, The Shadow, Job*
24 *Patineurs, Rinaldo and Armida, Daphnis and Chloe*
25 *Boutique Fantasque, Rinaldo and Armida, Job.*
26 *Lac des Cygnes* (Nerina, Rassine)
26(E) *Sylphides, Daphnis and Chloe, Patineurs.*

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET
Provincial Tour

February
21 Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton
28 New Theatre, Oxford
March
7 Hippodrome, Derby
14 Alhambra, Bradford
21 Globe Theatre, Stockton-on-Tees
28 Theatre Royal, Norwich
April
4 King's Theatre, Southsea

BALLET RAMBERT

February
7 The Gateway, Edinburgh (2 weeks)
21 Royalty Theatre, Chester
28 Hippodrome, Wigan
March
7 The Palace, Plymouth
14 Theatre Royal, Chatham
21 Connaught Theatre, Worthing
28 Coliseum, Harrow

ANTONIO AND HIS SPANISH BALLET

February 21 at the Palace Theatre, London for a season of at least six weeks.

BALLET WORKSHOP
at the Mercury Theatre, Ladbroke Road, London

First programmes of new season on March 13, 20, 27. New works by Donata Forte and Peter Darrell, revival of Michael Holmes' *Palisades*.

Ballet Correspondents

(Abbreviations: b.c.—ballet correspondence; m.—male; f.—female; m.a.—my age; o.i.—other interests; ls.—languages; p.r.—photograph requested).

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MISS FOTIS N. SKOYNTZOS, Gargaliani, Messenia, Greece, wants b.c., m. or f. (esp. dancers). m.a. 25. o.i. theatre, music, reading, sports. ls. English, Greek. all answered.

CHRISTOPHER SLEIGH, St. Boniface's College, Peverell, Plymouth, wants b.c., m. or f., age 19-21, anywhere esp. Paris or London. m.a. 19. o.i. music, opera, walking, languages. ls. French. p.r.

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Next Month

MARGOT FONTEYN
Anniversary Number

Celebrating Her 21 years on the Stage, with Articles and Pictures illustrating her Life and Career.

FULL-COLOUR
Cover Portrait

See Opposite Page

COVER STORIES

This month's front cover, by Denis de Marney, is of Maryon Lane in Kenneth Macmillan's new ballet, *Danses Concertantes*, for the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet.

LANE was born in Melmoth, Zululand. She first trained in New Zealand and later in Johannesburg with Pauline Stokes, Face de Villiers and Reina Hermann. In 1946 she came to England and was awarded a scholarship to the Sadler's Wells School where she remained for a year. In 1947 she joined the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet and from that time she worked up gradually to become the ballerina she is today. Apart from the classics, her most important roles have been in *The Rake's Progress, Reflection, Blood Wedding, Café des Sports* and *Danses Concertantes*.

This month's back cover, by Lido, is of Antonio and Rosita Segovia who are now appearing at the Palace Theatre, London.

ANTONIO was born in Seville. His first public appearance was at the Liège Exhibition in 1928. He and his partner Rosario enjoyed enormous success in Spain. Repeating their triumphs in America they also appeared in two films—*Ziegfield Girl* and *Hollywood Canteen*. Returning to Spain in 1948 they were hailed as the greatest Spanish dancers. Two years ago they parted and each formed a company. Antonio has appeared in London for two seasons with Rosario and once with his own company. The present visit is his fourth to the city that always gives him a warm welcome. Rosita Segovia, his partner after the departure of Rosario, was a principal dancer from the Liceo Opera House in Barcelona.

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Dance and Dancers

MARCH 1955

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Antonio Rosita Segovia